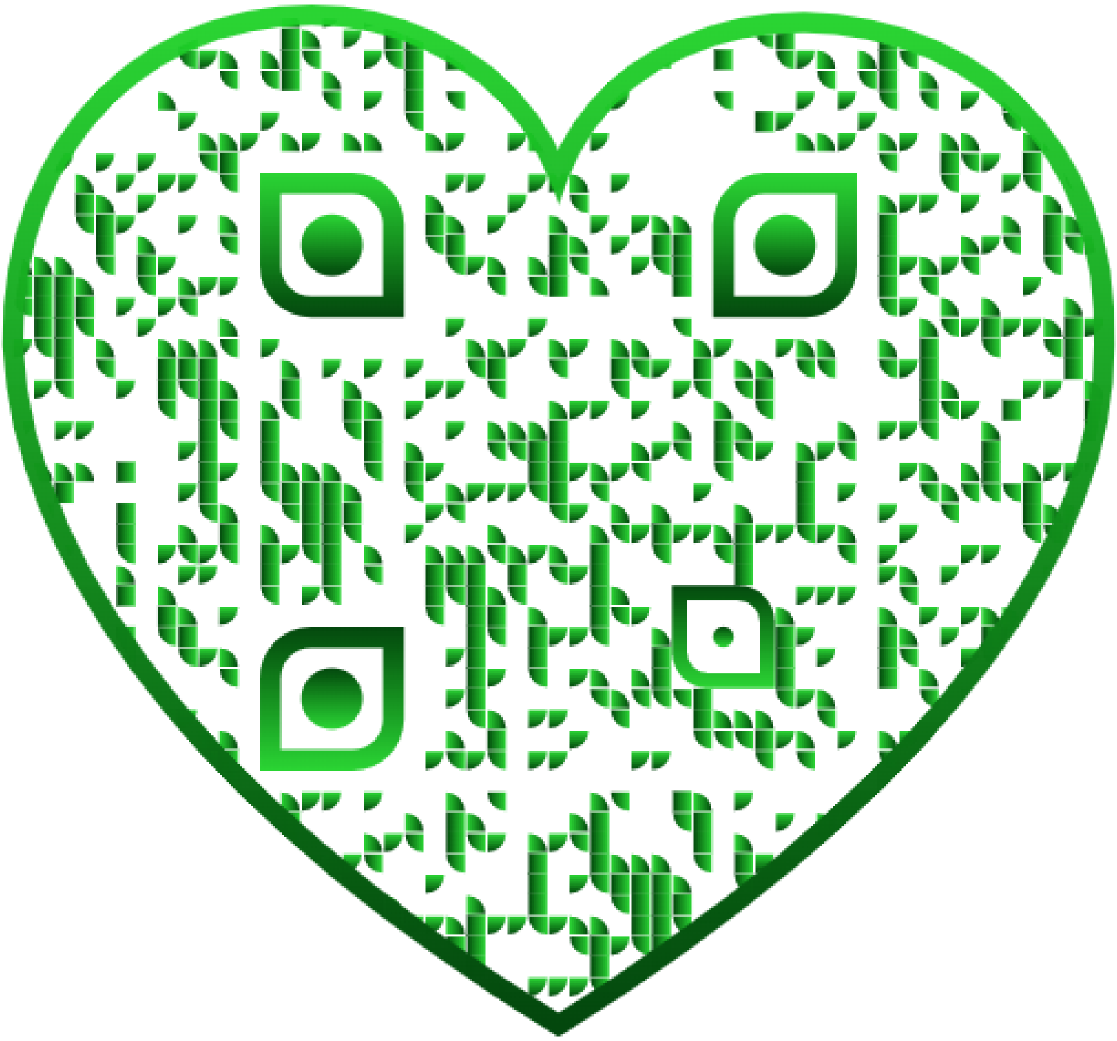
Charleston LIVING

September / October 2025

Fall Fashion
The New Classic

Go Explore!
Locals Take Back The Lowcountry This Fall

Food & Wine Classic | Building for the Lowcountry | Gather + Graze Recipes



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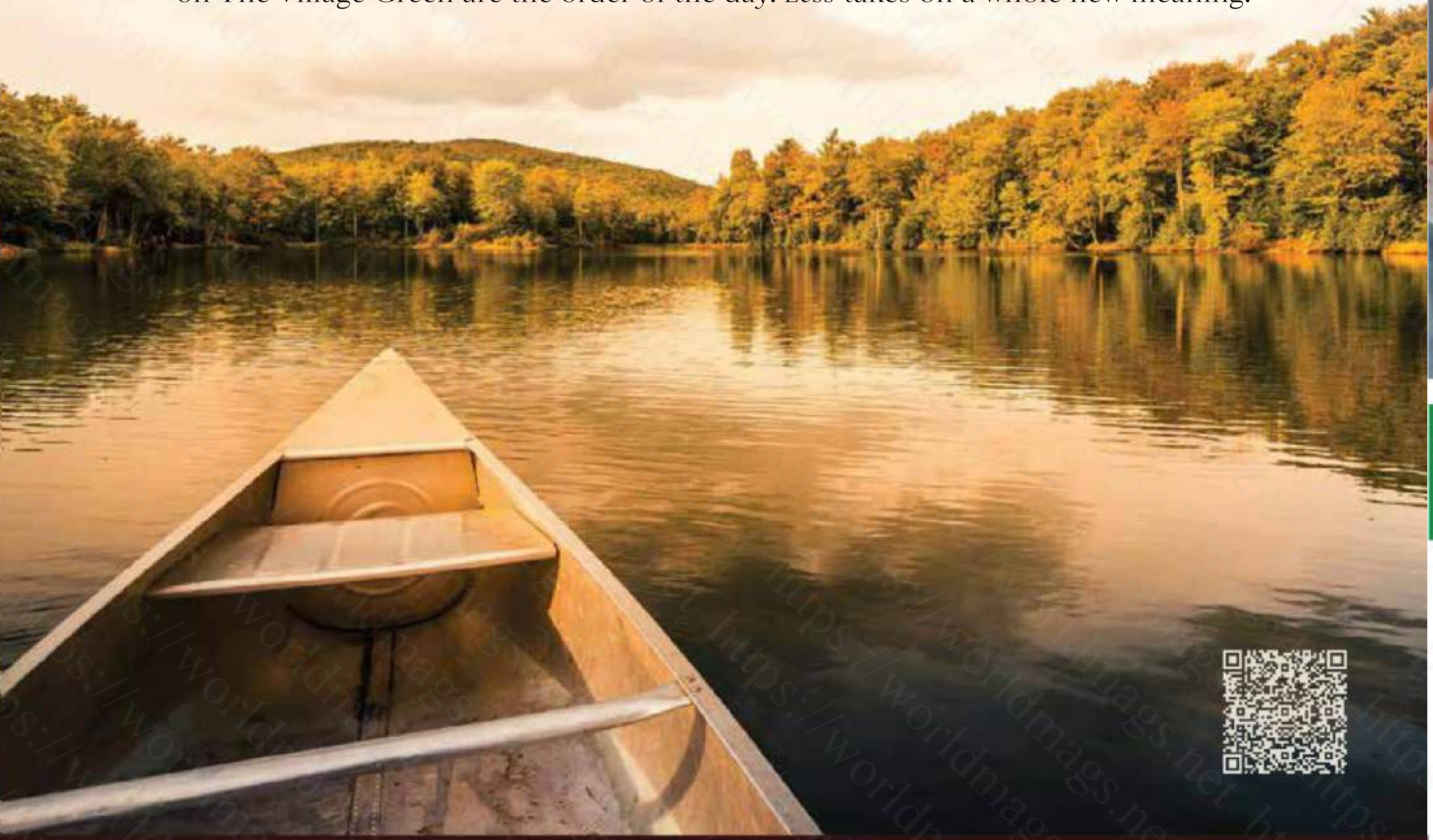
If you could have *anything*, what would it be?

If we can ask for anything, it would be for less, to be freed from the trappings of the modern world, especially its theft of time—which we would fill with family and friends, long walks to waterfalls, paddles dipped in the lake, and most of all, to be healthier and more observant of our natural world. Our storybook village is flip-flops close, farmers' markets and concerts on The Village Green are the order of the day. *Less* takes on a whole new meaning.



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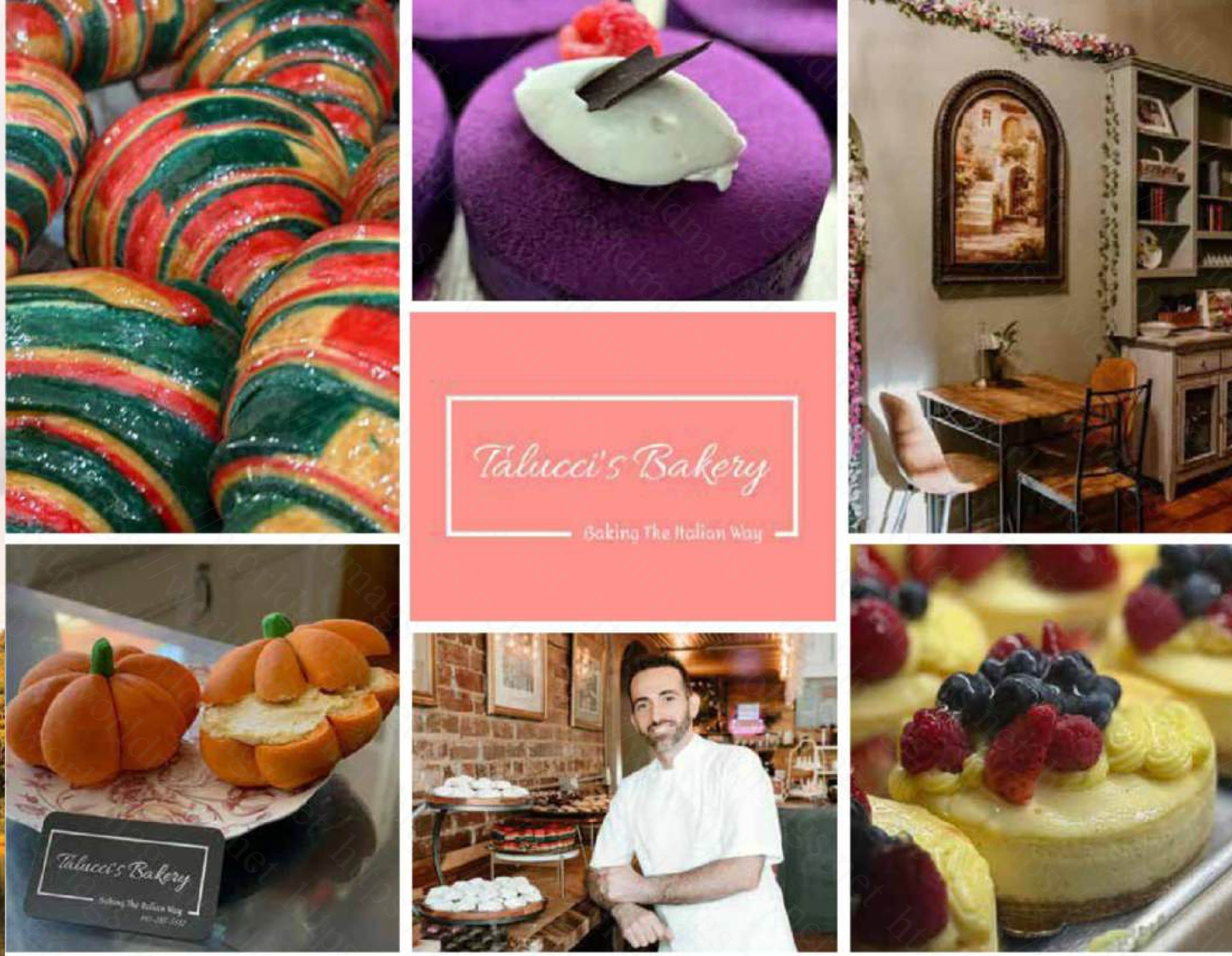

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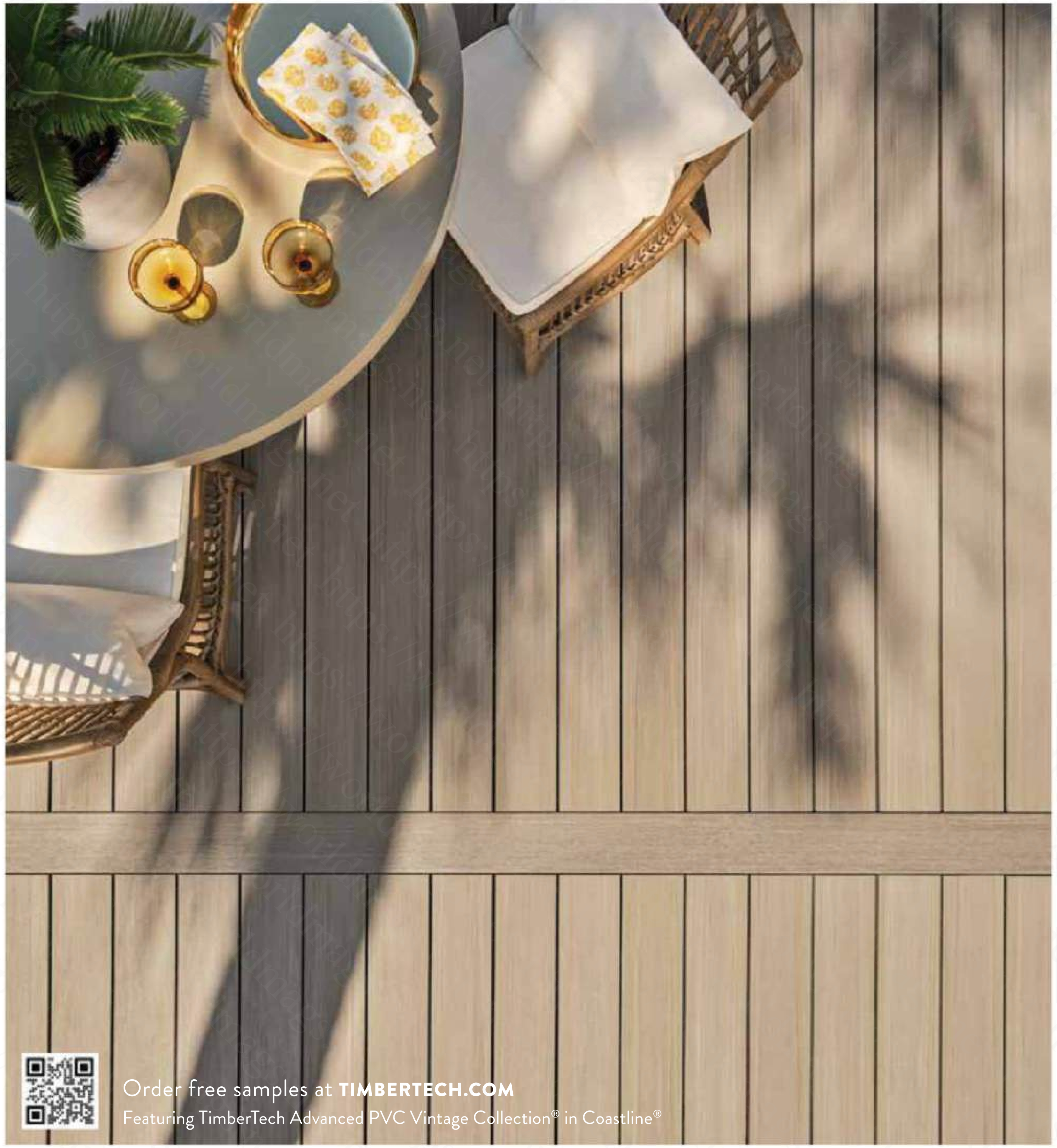

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TimberTech is everything ipe should be — beautiful, low maintenance, and sustainable. If you want an exotic hardwood look, TimberTech will meet your needs and exceed your expectations.

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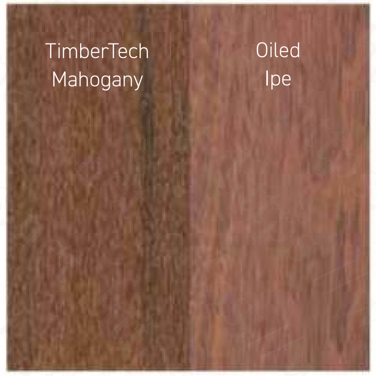

Real wood beauty to rival ipe

Whether you prefer the oiled or weathered ipe look, the Vintage Collection has the perfect options to suit your outdoor style.

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Learn more at TimberTech.com/ipealternative

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ON THE COVER »
A modern take on fall style.
Necklace $20, Lior Crescent Ruffle Top $100, Lior Citrine Crinkle $104, House Bag $48; All at Paisley of Daniel Island 194 Seven Farms Drive
All Over Town Heel $96.99; E. Blackhurst 145 King Street
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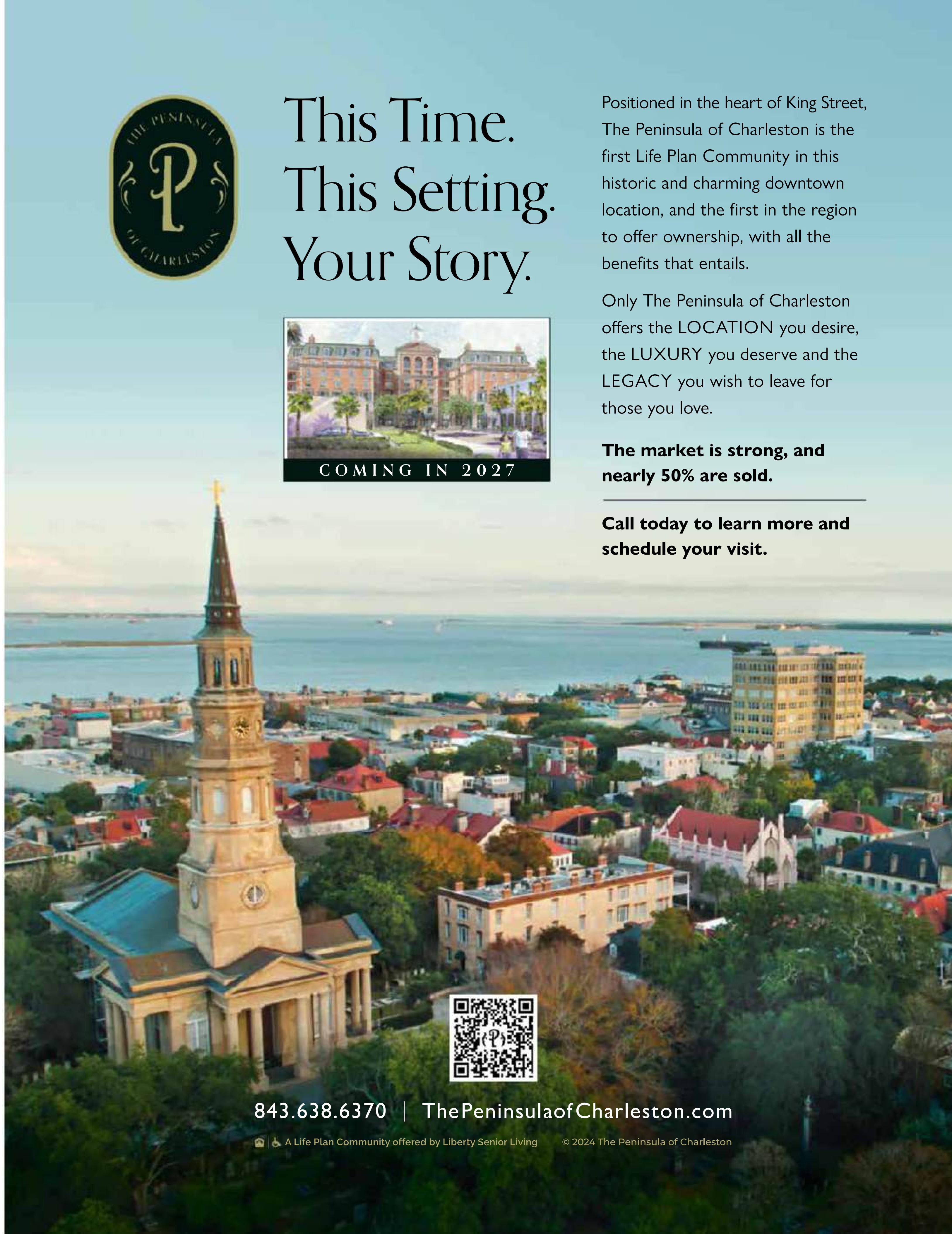

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Alec Gropman, *Bodega*

Marcus Shell, By The Way

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Scan to learn more about March of Dimes and the Charleston Signature Chefs Auction

The 26th Annual Charleston Signature Chefs Auction - the premier fundraiser for March of Dimes - will feature food tastings from top Charleston chefs, a live band, the Bill Hall Legacy Award presentation and an exceptional auction, Funds raised will support research, education, advocacy and NICU programs to fight for the health of all moms and babies.

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Carpe Diem

FALL HAS ARRIVED, AND WITH IT comes all the familiar markers: the roar of Friday night football, the countdown of those first 100 school days, the annual return of the pumpkin spice latte, and that comforting hum of routine, routine, routine. But here's the thing—fall might just be the perfect season to break from the expected.

Before the holiday hustle pulls us into its whirlwind, there's a rare window of time to slow down and rediscover the magic right in our own backyard. As our recipe sage Fanny Slater says, "We made it to the local's season!" In other words, the tourists may have thinned, but the opportunities for adventure are just getting good.

In this issue, we've rounded up ten ways to shake up your weekends without straying too far from home. My advice? Pick one. Maybe two if you're feeling bold. Hike the wild beauty of the ACE Basin. Dine under the stars at Lost Isle. Paddle your way along the winding Waccamaw River. Sometimes the best escapes are hiding in plain sight.

And speaking of hidden gems—did you know Charleston County is home to two food forests? Or that the Charleston Wine + Food festival brims with incredible homegrown talent you might have never heard of? We're also spotlighting inspiring women this season—like The ARK founder Peg Lahmeyer, whose dedication to serving those living with Alzheimer's is nothing short of heroic—and was recognized with an Order of the Palmetto, and artist Melissa Borland, whose joy bursts from every floral canvas she creates.

Elsewhere in these pages, you'll meet design firms reimagining Charleston style, business leaders who are making waves, and local builders whose spaces radiate Lowcountry charm and reflect personal story.

Fall is also, undeniably, about creature comforts. The meals that warm us, the books that pull us in, the shows we can't stop binging, the music that plays on repeat. We review The Select—a brasserie that channels Paris, raise a pint at Holy City Brewery, order something seasonal and a little bit daring at The Gin Joint, and soak in the signature hospitality at Halls Chophouse in Nexton.

So yes, enjoy the routines. Wrap yourself in the cozy and the familiar. But don't forget to leave room for the unexpected. This season is a sweet spot—bookended by the lazy heat of summer and the sparkling rush of the holidays—just waiting to be claimed.

Here's to making it yours.

Pamela Jouan

Pamela Jouan
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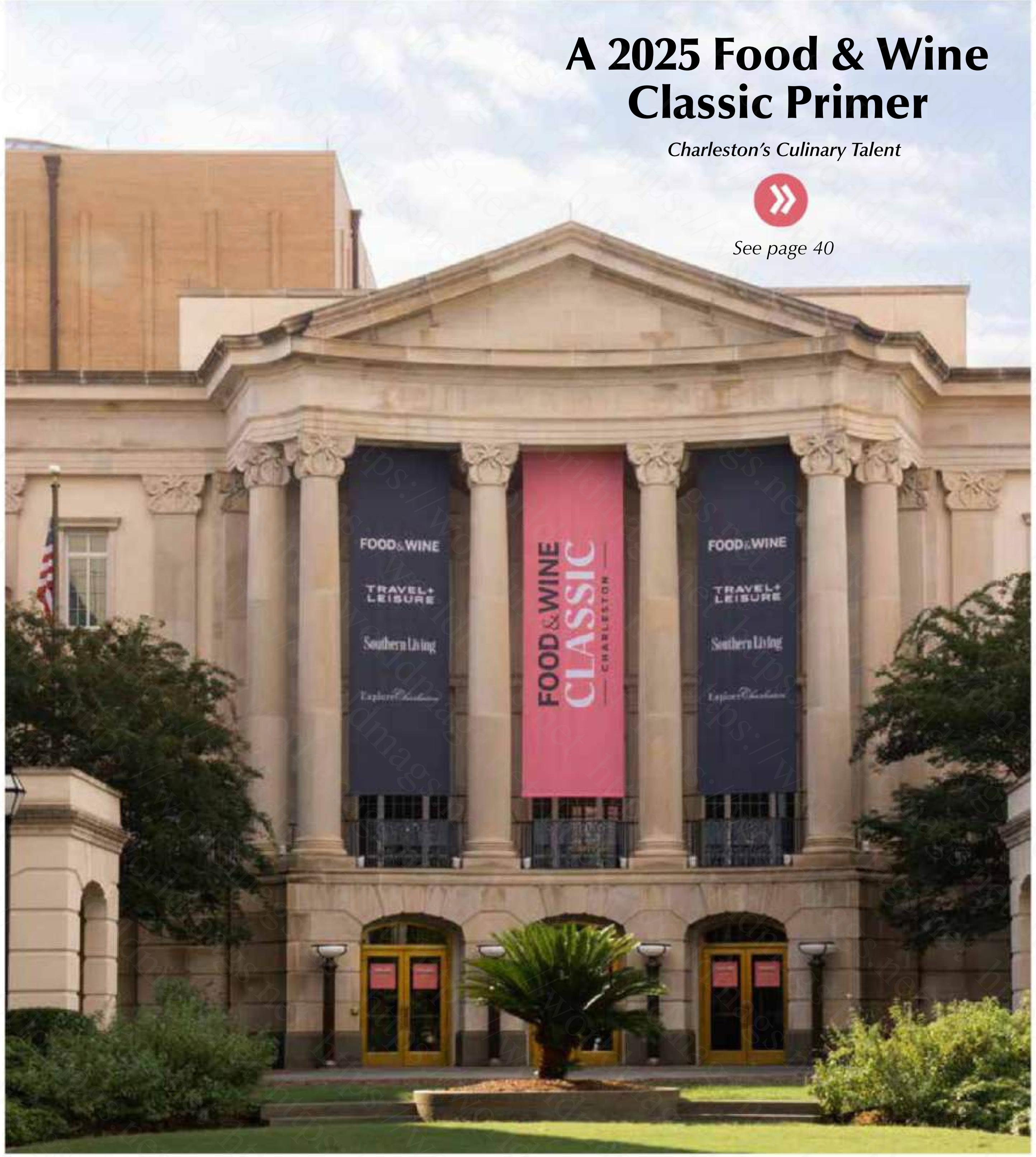

A 2025 Food & Wine Classic Primer

Charleston's Culinary Talent

See page 40

PHOTO CAMERON WILDER

The Reveal: SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

Our five musts from this issue's calendar of events.

MELT
CHARLESTON
MURALS
ENTERTAINMENT
LIFESTYLE
TRADITION
2025

MELT Mural Festival

September 11-14

Check out the first ever annual Mural Festival, celebrating and promoting the tradition of street art, and highlighting the city's vibrant heritage! 6-10 muralists (or mural teams) will be selected to paint at the festival, which will take place in North Charleston. Saturday, September 13 will be a free public event, featuring vendors, live painting, food trucks and more! Find out more at: www.meltcharleston.com

Riverfront Revival

October 10-11

Curated by Darius Rucker and produced by a seasoned team, Riverfront Revival is a love letter to country music and to South Carolina's Lowcountry at Riverfront Park in North Charleston. A two-day festival loaded with unforgettable live music, engaging culture and delicious tastes inspired by the region's unique foodways. Doors open at 3 p.m. on October 10 and 12:30 p.m. on October 11. Find this year's lineup at: riverfrontrevival.com

MOJA Arts Festival

September 25 - October 5

MOJA Arts Festival is an annual celebration of Black arts and culture and the related artistic contributions to the world, especially through African American and Caribbean legacies. The multi-disciplinary festival is produced and directed by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the MOJA Planning Committee, an all-volunteer community arts and cultural group. Festival events include visual arts, music, food, dance, poetry, theater, storytelling, traditional crafts and family activities. In addition to its myriad of Arts presentations, MOJA also includes an active and busy educational outreach component of workshops in the public schools and senior outreach in community centers.

Tango Meets Classical: CMC's 20th Anniversary Season Opening Celebration

September 28

Chamber Music Charleston celebrates the launch of the extraordinary 20th Anniversary Season with a dynamic concert that brings together guest artists, current and former CMC musicians, and distinguished alumni from the CMC TWO program for music. The concert opens with a masterpiece of baroque brilliance—Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3—followed by Astor Piazzolla's Tango-infused "Four Seasons of Buenos Aires." The program culminates with Mendelssohn's virtuosic Octet in E-flat Major, written 200 years ago and hailed as one of the greatest chamber works of all time. At St. Matthew's Lutheran Church on King Street.

Charleston Gaillard Center and Live Nation Present An Evening with Reese Witherspoon and Harlan Coben

October 21

Join two titans of storytelling– Academy Award-winning actress, producer, and New York Times bestselling author Reese Witherspoon and #1 global suspense phenomenon Harlan Coben—for a special Charleston Literary Festival 2025 Event to celebrate the publication of their gripping new thriller, Gone Before Goodbye. Reese and Harlan will take the stage to pull back the curtain on their blockbuster collaboration, and what it takes to craft a thriller that leaves readers breathless. During the conversation, hear from these creative forces as they share their process for making a collaboration not only work—but thrive—and the key elements that turned their partnership into a true success.

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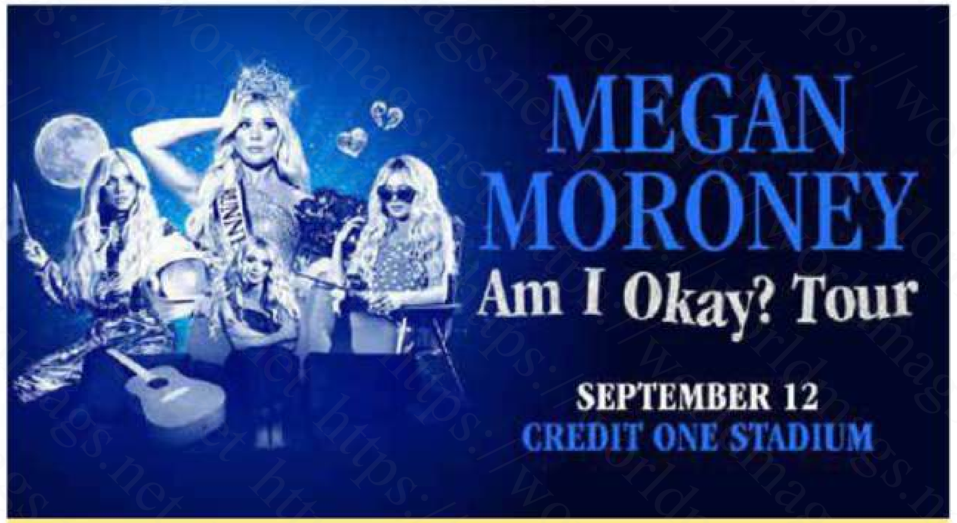

Megan Moroney at Credit One Stadium
September 12

Country and pop star Megan Moroney brings her wildly popular “Am I Okay?” tour to Daniel Island’s Credit One Stadium. This American singer and songwriter from Douglasville, Georgia, is best known for "Tennessee Orange", the second single from her debut album, which went top 10 on the US Hot Country Songs chart. She released her second album, “Am I Okay?” in July 2024.

Looking to fill your social calendar?
We’ve got the rundown on how to stay entertained
this fall season.

SEPTEMBER

MELT Mural Festival
September 11-14

Check out the first ever annual Mural Festival, celebrating and promoting the tradition of street art, and highlighting the city’s vibrant heritage! 6-10 muralists (or mural teams) will be selected to paint at the festival, which will take place in North Charleston. Saturday Sept 13 will be a free public event, featuring vendors, live painting, food trucks and more! Find out more at: www.meltcharleston.com

BBQ and Boots Festival
September 13

Bring your appetite and western wear to the Charleston RiverDogs BBQ & Boots Festival. This year’s featured performer is country music artist, Austin Burke. There’ll be live music, BBQ, vendors, games and more! Event time 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Joseph P. Riley Park.

Michael Franti & Spearhead at Firefly Distillery
September 14

Michael Franti & Spearhead brings the Welcome To The Family Tour to the Firefly Distillery, North Charleston. With special guests Tank and the Bangas.

Pickle Palooza II
September 20

PICKLE PALOOZA

The largest pickle festival in the Southeast returns! Get ready for a day filled with picklelicious fun at one of Charleston's newest large-scale venues. Not a pickle lover? No worries! There are plenty of regular dish options as well! Get ready for a *brine*-tastic experience as you celebrate all things pickles. A festival-style atmosphere with live music featuring multiple bands/DJs, food trucks, beer tents, liquor vendors, games and more. Starts at 1 p.m. at The Rickhouse at Cannon Distillery.

Last Mount Pleasant Farmers Market for the Season
September 30

It’s the end of the season! The Mount Pleasant Farmers Market is a gathering place for locals and visitors to leisurely explore the market’s treasure trove. The opening bell rings at 3:30 p.m. Stock up on all your honey, oil, spices and other items to tide you over until the spring. This traditional “food and produce” market celebrates the hard work and dedication of local farmers and the harvest they provide. Enjoy live music along with goods from local farmers and vendors! At Moultire Middle School.

MOJA Arts Festival
September 25, - October 5

MOJA Arts Festival is an annual celebration of Black arts and culture and the related artistic contributions to the world, especially through African American and Caribbean legacies. The multi-disciplinary festival is produced and directed by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the MOJA Planning Committee, an all-volunteer community arts and cultural group. Festival events include visual arts, music, food, dance, poetry, theater, storytelling, traditional crafts and family activities. In addition to its myriad of Arts presentations, MOJA also includes an active and busy educational outreach component of workshops in the public schools and senior outreach in community centers.

Incredible Con
September 27-28

Incredible Con is a two day anime experience with stars from your favorite anime shows and films that takes place at the Charleston Area Convention Center. Join the thousands of fans that have already discovered the Incredible Con experience. Special Guests include Kyle Hebert, Dragon Ball Z, My Hero Academia, Bleach, Demon Slayer, Boruto and so many more. Learn more at incrediblecon.com

Tango Meets Classical: CMC’s 20th Anniversary Season Opening Celebration
September 28th

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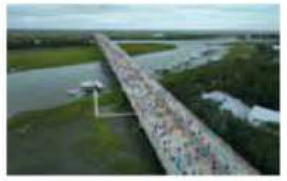
gether guest artists, current and former CMC musicians, and distinguished alumni from the CMC TWO program for music. The concert opens with a masterpiece of baroque brilliance - Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3—followed by Astor Piazzolla's Tango-infused "Four Seasons of Buenos Aires." The program culminates with Mendelssohn's virtuosic Octet in E-flat Major, written 200 years ago and hailed as one of the greatest chamber works of all time. At St. Matthew's Lutheran Church on King Street.

OCTOBER

Charleston Gaillard Center Presents Elvis Costello and The Imposters
October 3
D.P. MacManus—better known as Elvis Costello—has been performing for over fifty years and has written more than 600 songs, including collaborations with Paul McCartney, Burt Bacharach, and Diana Krall. He is a two-time Grammy Award winner, a BAFTA recipient, and a member of both the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Elvis Costello & The Imposters, joined by Charlie Sexton, bring an unforgettable evening of musical storytelling to the Gaillard Center stage. Show starts at 7:30 p.m.

IOP Connector Run
October 4



The Isle of Palms Connector Run is a fun but challenging road race across the IOP Connector. Starting at 8 a.m. on the Isle of Palms, crossing into Mount Pleasant and returning to IOP, 10K and 5K runners, walkers, and teams of all experience levels and ages will be rewarded with beautiful vistas of the Atlantic Ocean, Intracoastal Waterway, local creeks, marsh views and waterfowl. A post-race festival for the whole family features live music, free beer (21+), kids' area, cash prizes, awards ceremony and vendor exhibits.

Charleston Gaillard Center Presents The Concert: A Tribute to ABBA
October 5
21st Century Artists has presented The Concert: A Tribute to ABBA, the ultimate ABBA tribute show throughout North America, for well over 20 years. The audience and press all agree: "This is the closest to ABBA you'll ever get!" Dazzling all who see with their fantastic performance while playing the most iconic hits, including "Mamma Mia," "S.O.S," "Money, Money, Money," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "Waterloo," "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme" and "Dancing Queen." Event time 7:30 p.m.

Dorchester Habitat for Humanity 2025 Golf Classic
October 10th
The 2025 Dorchester Habitat for Humanity Golf Classic benefits their mission of building homes, communities and hope! Mark your calendars for Friday, Oct 10, and tee up at the beautiful Wescott Golf Club in Summerville. Enjoy a day on the course while supporting our work to provide affordable housing for families in Dorchester County. More details at: dorchesterhabitat.org/project/golf-classic

Halloween Movies in the Park: GHOSTBUSTERS
October 19
Who ya gonna call? "Ghostbusters"! Join us for our final Movie Night event of the year! We're going into the Halloween season with a special screening of the original "Ghostbusters" movie. Be sure to bring lawn chairs, a blanket, and dress up for the occasion! The movie begins at sunset. This is a free event, open to the public at Gahagan Park in Summerville.

Riverfront Revival
October 10-11
Curated by Darius Rucker and produced by a seasoned team, Riverfront Revival is a love letter to country music and to South Carolina's Lowcountry at Riverfront Park in North Charleston. A two-day festival loaded with unforgettable live music, engaging culture and delicious tastes inspired by the region's unique foodways. Doors open at 3 p.m. on Oct 10 and 12:30 p.m. on Oct 11. Find this year's lineup at: riverfrontrevival.com

Harvest Festival
October 18
In partnership with the North Charleston Cultural Arts Department, the Annual Harvest Festival is a great way to celebrate Halloween. This free community event includes, trick or treating, kids zone and activities, music, vendors, costume contest and more!

Children's Day Festival
October 19

Old and new traditions delight at the 37th Annual Town of Mount Pleasant Children's Day Festival! Families will enjoy carnival rides, inflatable slides, live

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Charleston Gaillard Center and Live Nation Present An Evening with Reese Witherspoon and Harlan Coben
October 21
Join two titans of storytelling—Academy Award-winning actress, producer, and *New York Times* bestselling author Reese Witherspoon and #1 global suspense phenomenon Harlan Coben for a special Charleston Literary Festival 2025 Event to celebrate the publication of their gripping new thriller, "Gone Before Goodbye." Reese and Harlan will take the stage to pull back the curtain on their blockbuster collaboration, and what it takes to craft a thriller that leaves readers breathless. During the conversation, hear from these creative forces as they share their process for making a collaboration not only work—but thrive—and the key elements that turned their partnership into a true success.

Charleston Beer Fest
Saturday October 25
Charleston Beer Fest is back with more breweries, more music, bigger acts, more food, games and activities! Head to Riverfront Park in North Charleston for the best beer festival in the Lowcountry! Event is rain or shine. Tickets are non-refundable. All guests must be 21+ with valid ID. No children. No exceptions. No outside food or beverages. Runs from 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Ranky Tanky
October 26
This Grammy Award-winning, Charleston, South Carolina-based quintet, performs timeless music born from the Gullah culture of the southeastern Sea Islands. Their debut album was featured on NPR's Fresh Air with Terry Gross and the TODAY show. It also soared to the number one position on the Billboard, Amazon, and iTunes Jazz Charts. Playful game songs, ecstatic shouts, and heartbreaking spirituals can all be found on their latest release "Good Times," which also offers the groups first original songs inspired by Gullah tradition. Showtime is at 7:30 p.m. at the West Beach Conference Center in Kiawah Island. ■

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Reviews: Television and Music

DENISE K. JAMES ON NEW FILMS, TELEVISION AND MUSIC

Leanne

5 Stars

Netflix, Starring Leanne Morgan and Kristen Johnston

As soon as the first few minutes of Netflix's lighthearted new sitcom "Leanne" came on my screen, I gasped in surprise. Was the layout somehow familiar? I'd seen that kitchen window placement, back stairwell and living room before, right? Somewhere in the depths of a 1990s memory. Sadly, after consulting the internet, nothing vouched for my suspicion that the set was the very same one from my old favorite, *Step by Step*.

But perhaps that's not the point. As I powered through the generous first season (16 episodes) about a woman whose husband steps out on their marriage, I realized "Leanne" satisfied a deep craving I hadn't known I had—like when a meal unexpectedly hits the spot. Starring Leanne Morgan as the eponymous main character and Kristen Johnston as her wisecracking sister Carol, this straightforward, nostalgic story of a family coming to terms with a marriage split is both healing and hilarious.

As the show begins, Leanne is trying to take a higher road—staying out of her soon-to-be-ex-husband's way, and eschewing drunkenness or mania. But comedic situations of course, ensue, and I found myself laughing out loud multiple times at Carol's comments, the ridiculous reactions of their parents, Margaret (Celia Weston) and John (Blake Clark), and the audacity of husband Bill. This show delighted my true sense of humor, which is not crude, dark or dry—like much of today's content—but honest, relatable and silly. In my opinion, we're starved for that kind of humor—and I seem to be right. "Leanne" scored a 93 percent on Rotten Tomatoes at the time of this writing and landed in the number two spot on the streaming giant's charts.

Did the traditional sitcom die with cable television? Some say yes. And while it's obvious that fewer of them exist today, I would love to see more shows like this one, as well as a season two. I can put on an episode of "Leanne" while I'm washing dishes or making supper and enjoy its low stakes with easy laughs. Who among us couldn't benefit from that in our dark, troubled world? ■

Margo Price

"Hard Headed Woman"

Loma Vista Recordings

I've never been the biggest country fan, but I admire Margo Price for her strong will. Case in point—one of her first releases from the new "Hard Headed Woman" (nice title) is called "Don't Let the Bastards Get You Down." It's a cheeky, rousing romp that even non-country-lovers can tap their foot to. Also, download "Losing Streak," a solid tune featuring fun lyrics about parties we can't recall and cars from the early '90s.

MARGO PRICE
HARD HEADED WOMAN

Iron & Wine and Ben Bridwell

Making Good Time (EP)

I had to include this EP in my reviews. Ben Bridwell's (Band of Horses) voice is well-known among Southern indie rock fans. He and Sam Beam (Iron & Wine), childhood friends, reunite for their second project—the follow-up to "Sing into my Mouth." At just five well-crafted unes, all covers, you'll want to download the whole thing.

Making Good Time
IRON AND WINE & BEN BRIDWELL

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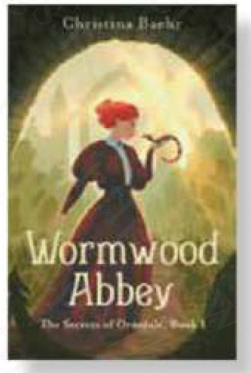
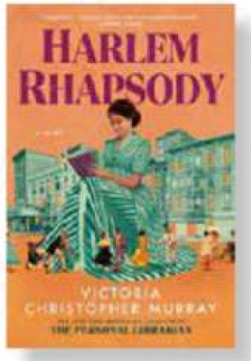
Holy Time Machine! Books for Fall



Wormwood Abbey

By Christina Baehr

When her father inherits an ancestral home in the Yorkshire countryside that comes with the unexpected responsibility of *dragons,* Edith Worms finds herself navigating not only family secrets, but real danger both beastly and human. Despite its fantastical premise, the novel feels firmly and realistically rooted in its 1899 setting, with a narrative style similar to turn-of-the century authors like L.M. Montgomery or E. Nesbit. The book not only boasts a true vintage feel, but also a cast of distinct characters, unique family relationships and nuanced themes. If you like your historical fiction mixed with a dash of cozy fantasy, "Wormwood Abbey" is the perfect comfort read. Best of all, it is the first in a five-book series, meaning there is plenty more to enjoy after the last page has been turned. *—Hayden Wand, Children's Services associate at Otranto Road Library*



Harlem Rhapsody

By Victoria Christopher Murray

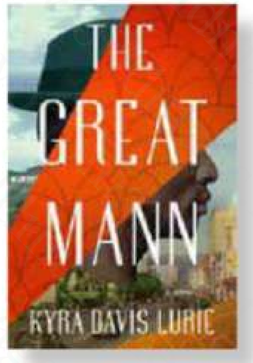
If you liked "The Personal Librarian" co-authored by *New York Times* bestselling author Victoria Christopher Murray, you will love her most recent novel, "Harlem Rhapsody." This novel is primarily set in the 1920s-1930s in New York, where Jessie Redmon Fauset was instrumental in discovering and nurturing many of the artists of the Harlem Renaissance. At a time when she faced overwhelming racism and sexism, she led The Crisis, a publication of the NAACP, as the literary editor, in addition to being an educator, editor, poet, essayist and novelist. This beautiful interpretation of this extraordinary woman tells her story, and her complicated personal and professional relationships. *—Pamela Sweezy, associate director of Northwest District of Charleston County Public Library*

ATMOSPHERE
TAYLOR JENKINS REID

Atmosphere

By Taylor Jenkins Reid

Taylor Jenkins Reid, *New York Times* bestselling author, known for "Daisy Jones & The Six" and "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo," wrote the manuscript for "Atmosphere" after spending several months immersed in NASA's program in Houston, Texas. The book opens in the 1980s with an impending crisis: a mechanical failure causes a space shuttle to malfunction, rendering all astronauts aboard unconscious—except one. Joan Goodwin, an astronaut working in mission control, must guide her love interest safely back to Earth. The book alternates between tones of urgency and tenderness, exploring not only gender dynamics and the pioneering role of women astronauts, but also a deeper journey of love, connection, and complex family relationships.*—Bailey Pierce, Adult Services librarian, Dorchester Road Library*



The Great Mann

By Kyra Davis Laurie

"The Great Mann" by Kyra Davis Laurie, is a vivid, engaging retelling of "The Great Gatsby," set in the real-life neighborhood of the Sugar Hill Historical District, West Adams Heights, a neighborhood in Central Los Angeles, where the elite Black community thrived. World War II soldier Charlie Trammell travels across the country to visit his cousin Marguerite and stays at a local actress's boarding house. What he discovers in West Adams Heights is a land of opportunity that had not existed for Black people anywhere else in the country. He soon catches the eye of millionaire James "Reaper" Mann, an eccentric resident who throws extravagant parties that attract some of the most famous stars of Black Hollywood. But not everything is what it seems. Tensions start to rise when the white neighbors, seeing their fortunes dwindle, set off a landmark court case that will shape the future of the neighborhood. *— Shayla Scott, Adult Services librarian from the Charleston Main Library*

Legacy by Design

How Hope Caldwell and KLH Group is working with Charleston's most visionary leaders to turn business into a force for good

By PAMELA JOUAN

ON A WARM CHARLESTON MORNING, HOPE CALDWELL WALKS INTO THE ROOM LIKE SUNLIGHT. It could be the bright yellow dress, or maybe it's the kind of conviction that only comes from knowing you're doing something that matters; something that turns the world. As the founder of KLH Group, Caldwell isn't just organizing world-class events—she's reimagining what they can mean. Her mission is bold: to turn the luxury event industry into a catalyst for lasting social impact, one memory-shifting moment at a time.

"I founded KLH Group out of a desire to reimagine the event and hospitality industry, and its role in facilitating meaningful change," Caldwell says. After spending time on the mission fields in East Africa, she felt a calling to start a company that restores a full expression of humanness. "Here's what we believe: the difference between cutting a check and changing a life is the difference between doing good and being transformed by good."In this fast-paced world, she aims to ground people—let them experience the unmistakable expression of grace through events.

A Shift to Transformation

Take, for example, a global airline that recently brought its C-suite to Charleston for a retreat. What began as a traditional leadership

KLH Group founder Hope Caldwell (L) with Navigation Center CEO Marie Elana Roland.

PHOTO RUTA SMITH

summit turned into something unforgettable when KLH coordinated a community service event. The executives spent an afternoon building playhouses for children facing serious illness. The CEO formed a bond with one child that forever changed his perspective.

"That little boy had no idea who this man was, only that he was building him a playhouse, but that experience leveled the CEO," Caldwell recalls. "When your heart is moved, the memory sticks. That's what we strive for—a legacy that outlasts the passed hors d'oeuvres and the craft cocktails."

This ethos has found fertile ground in Charleston's hospitality ecosystem. Caldwell is quick to point to other leaders who are walking the same path. The Beemok Hospitality Collection, for instance, is investing deeply in Meeting Street Schools, while The Kiawah Island Golf Resort, in partnership with Jonathan Barth of Third Serve Foundation, is bridging athletics and academics to support underserved youth. Additionally, Hotel Bennett Salamander Collection integrates social impact into luxury travel through programs like Clubhouse builds in partnership with KLH and Collin Carter of Hotel Bennett.

"Socially responsible events are increasingly important in luxury hospitality because they offer a deeper, more meaningful experience than traditional luxury," says Collin. "These programs redefine luxury by focusing on emotional and social impact. By integrating activities like the Clubhouse Challenge, hotels are meeting a growing demand from guests who seek to connect with a brand that reflects their values and provides opportunities to make a positive impact. These events replace conventional team building with transformative experiences, forging stronger bonds among participants and creating lasting emotional connections that traditional amenities can't match. This approach positions luxury hotels as leaders in a new era of hospitality defined by purpose, community and genuine human connection."

Another key partner is the Navigation Center, a local nonprofit serving Charleston's underserved and unhoused. KLH recently worked at The Dunlin, Auberge Resorts Collection, on John's Island to host a client's event where executives participated in a social impact activity that ultimately supplied the center with critical items like blow up mattresses and kitchen kits. The evening was interspersed with heartfelt stories from the Center's CEO and director, Marie Elana Roland.

"The partnership with KLH Group that evening was amazing," says Roland. "They brought us essential items like blow-up mattresses and 'kitchen in a box' kits, which are critical for families we're placing in transitional housing or hotels. But more than that, they gave us a platform to share our mission. We're not a brick-and-mortar shelter—we're addressing homelessness by digging deep into the root causes like trauma, mental health, and medical needs. Being able to tell our story to corporate guests, many of whom were moved to tears, helps them see that this isn't just a Charleston issue. Homelessness is everywhere, and maybe now they'll be inspired to support organizations doing this work in their own communities."

(Left): Hope Caldwell promotes purpose, community and genuine human connection.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KLH GROUP

Cortland Designs spent an afternoon in Marion Square impacting 3 pediatric cancer patients while on their two-day retreat from Atlanta.

The KLH Way: Starting with Passion, Ending with Purpose

The process always starts with a conversation. What is your company passionate about? Who have you always wanted to help? Caldwell makes a distinction between traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) and what she calls "impact-first business."

"A company like Nike might incorporate recycled materials to check the CSR box, but a company like Patagonia exists to solve a world problem," she explains. KLH not only adds social impact to their events, but they also weave it into the fabric.

That approach has made KLH a magnet for clients who want to move from performative to transformative.

Whether the event is a high-end corporate dinner, a multi-day conference, or a destination retreat, Caldwell's team ensures every element—from table linens to transportation—honors the client's values while benefiting Charleston's communities.

"This is sophistication through service," Caldwell says. Our clients expect elegance, and we deliver—but we also invite them into something bigger."

Meet More Movement Makers

KLH may be a leader, but it's not alone. Charleston's impact-first movement is growing, and Caldwell is quick to celebrate fellow changemakers in addition to **Marie Elana Roland, Collin Carter,** and **Jonathan Barth:**

» **Steve Palmer** and **Mickey Bakst** of Indigo Road and founders of Ben's Friends are reshaping how the industry supports hospitality workers battling addiction.

» **Alyssa Maute Smith**, executive director of the Charleston Wine + Food and their Culinary + Hospitality Foundation that provides stipends to industry professionals who participate in the festival as well as education and workforce development programs.

» **Josh Bell** of Meeting Street schools is helping empower the next generation through education opportunity and mentorship.

Each of these leaders contributes to a growing ecosystem where the lines between service and impact, and luxury and empathy are beautifully blurred.

The Future Is Charleston

What would you do if you could change the trajectory of your company by rethinking how you do business? "Money can't buy what we give—it can buy the event, but it can't buy the feeling," says Caldwell.

With the world watching and clients returning year after year, Charleston is poised to become the gold standard for impact-driven hospitality. Through partnerships with visionary hoteliers, nonprofit leaders, and corporate teams hungry for meaning, KLH is proving that events can do more than entertain—they can leave a legacy. ■

Transforming Public Green Spaces into Viable Food Sources

Charleston Parks Conservancy set to launch second food forest initiative in historic Ashleyville-Maryville community

By COLIN MCCANDLESS

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CHARLESTON PARKS CONSERVANCY

A UNIQUE, ECO-FRIENDLY VENTURE SLATED FOR COMPLETION THIS fall will provide free organic produce and educational opportunities to residents of the historic Ashleyville-Maryville neighborhood of West Ashley, while also serving as a sustainable community asset.

The Charleston Parks Conservancy (CPC), in partnership with the City of Charleston, has expanded its Food Forest Initiative to create the Ashleyville Food Forest. This follows the development of South Carolina's first public food forest endeavor at Mulberry Park in the Ardmore-Sherwood Forest area of West Ashley in the spring of 2024.

Plantings featured at Ashleyville may depend on sourcing and availability, but generally will include a mix of fruiting perennial species such as nut and fruit trees, vining species like muscadine, and shrubs including blackberries, blueberries and strawberries, according to Charleston Parks Conservancy Community Garden Manager Sam Haab.

"The goal of the existing food—and this one—is that almost everything is perennial and edible, or usable in some medicinal or culinary way," Haab says.

The Ashleyville parcel already has healthy, established turf, so CPC is leaving large swathes of grass intact for play opportunities and picnic area use. There will also be a border garden with herbs in raised planter beds, and a mix of pollinator-friendly plants.

"The goal of these forests is to provide free organic produce, public education and also resilient green space," explains Haab. "We manage the spaces organically and in a way that promotes biodiversity of insects and other pollinators and animal species. And so in those ways it'll help advance sustainability, but also help promote equity and improve food access, particularly in communities that are facing limited access to fresh, affordable produce."

As an educational resource, Ashleyville will have signage and a virtual harvesting guide available to the public. CPC also hopes to offer free community events and workshops. In early summer, Mulberry Food Forest hosted a community potluck, in partnership with Slow Food Charleston and the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs, with more than 125 members from the community dropping by to share dishes. Chefs prepared dishes onsite as well.

Key Ashleyville project partners and stakeholders include the City of Charleston, which supplied the land parcel; CPC, which operates exclusively within the City of Charleston parks; the Ashleyville-Maryville Neighborhood Association; and Bank of America and the international Volvo for Life Fund, who funded the expansion initiative through grants.

"We are thrilled to support Charleston Parks Conservancy in pioneering a model that addresses food access, environmental health and community empowerment," says Mark Munn, president, Bank of America Charleston-Hilton Head. "This continues our commitment to community wellness in Charleston after having supported the Mulberry Food Forest in 2024."

(Left): Community members tending the plot at Mulberry Food Forest.

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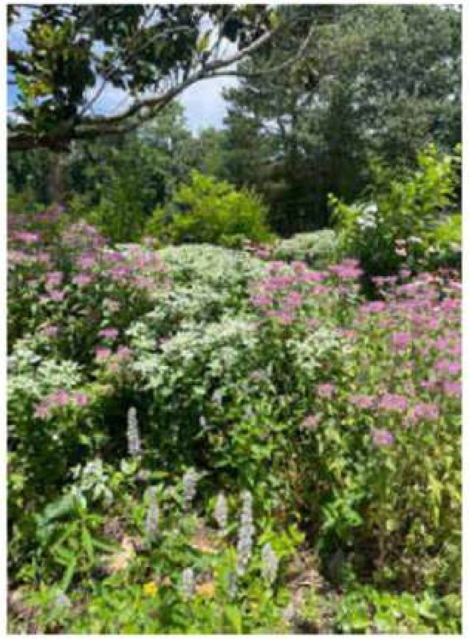

Planting the Seed

Ashleyville-Maryville community member Tyler Corsello initially proposed the Ashleyville Food Forest idea last October in an email to CPC. Corsello, who had moved from downtown to West Ashley in February 2024, had found Mulberry Food Forest while exploring the area. He had always liked co-op community agriculture and the notion that neighborhoods could have these shared fresh produce resources, but he didn't realize anything similar existed in Charleston.

After researching Mulberry, he learned of its designation as the state's first food forest, and that CPC sought to expand the program. Corsello felt that with the West Ashley Bikeway running through it and the available land in the neighborhood, Ashleyville-Maryville would make an ideal location for another food forest, if feasible. He contacted CPC about the prospect. "They were thrilled that there were other communities that were interested in having one of these in their neighborhood and they were very quick to make it happen and secure the grants and get the community on board," recounts Corsello.

He identifies two main components that underscore the food forest's significance to Ashleyville-Maryville. The first is the free organic produce. "That's awesome for any community," he says. "Who wouldn't want to be able to go outside and pick some fresh berries, lemons, peaches and all that great stuff? Especially in this neighborhood where there is no real close grocery store. A lot of residents in this community don't have a car, so it's definitely nice to have a source there."

The second is the rich history. As a historically black community with deep agricultural roots, many of the community members that CPC spoke with indicated that a food forest would allow residents to rediscover and honor that agricultural legacy. "One of the goals of the Ashleyville Food Forest is to honor that legacy of land stewardship in Charleston," notes Haab.

Additionally, Corsello said he has discovered how important youth programming is to the neighborhood. Ashleyville-Maryville features numerous younger families with children, and the food forest presents opportunities for kids to get involved, whether volunteering with plantings, cleanups or educational workshops. "I think that's going to be a huge benefit for our neighborhood as well," states Corsello.

Referencing higher grocery prices and the steep expense of entertainment activities these days, Corsello muses, "The idea that we're able to offer food, education and recreation to the community at no cost is truly a wonderful thing. And it seems that everyone who has learned about the project is super excited to see it come to fruition and grow and thrive."

Bringing the Project to Fruition

After the initial ask in October 2024, a CPC staff member met with Corsello. A month later, CPC discussed the project at a meeting of the Ashleyville-Maryville Neighborhood Association. Once it became clear to CPC that the community supported the Food Forest Initiative, Haab, along with CPC's Director of Operations & Education, Katie Bell, conducted a site visit at the land parcel to get an idea of the space and determine the site prep that would be needed before installing the fruiting species.

Haab drafted an initial design plan in April, which she submitted to the City of Charleston in May for approval. Later in May, CPC presented the design at a community engagement meeting held at Carr-Richardson Park. Also in May, CPC contracted for installation of the water meter, tree removal and brush clearing, which will be finished by August or September. The plan is to start sourcing plants in August and September, with installation scheduled for October. A ribbon-cutting event is scheduled for November.

Since the Mulberry Food Forest launch in 2024, other municipalities and neighborhoods have visited the site to study it as a potential model for guiding their own food forest projects.

"We've had numerous requests for similar models to be done elsewhere throughout Charleston," says Haab. "Capacity-wise and funding-wise, we can only take on this secondary food forest, but it is cool to be reimagining how we're using public green spaces as a place of food production." ■

(Above, left): The Ashleyville Food Forest will feature fruit trees including different varieties of citrus as shown here at Mulberry Food Forest. (Above right): When completed, Ashleyville Food Forest will include a mix of pollinator-friendly plants like the pollinator garden seen here at Mulberry Food Forest.

PHOTOS MILA PHOTOGRAPHY; SAM HAAB

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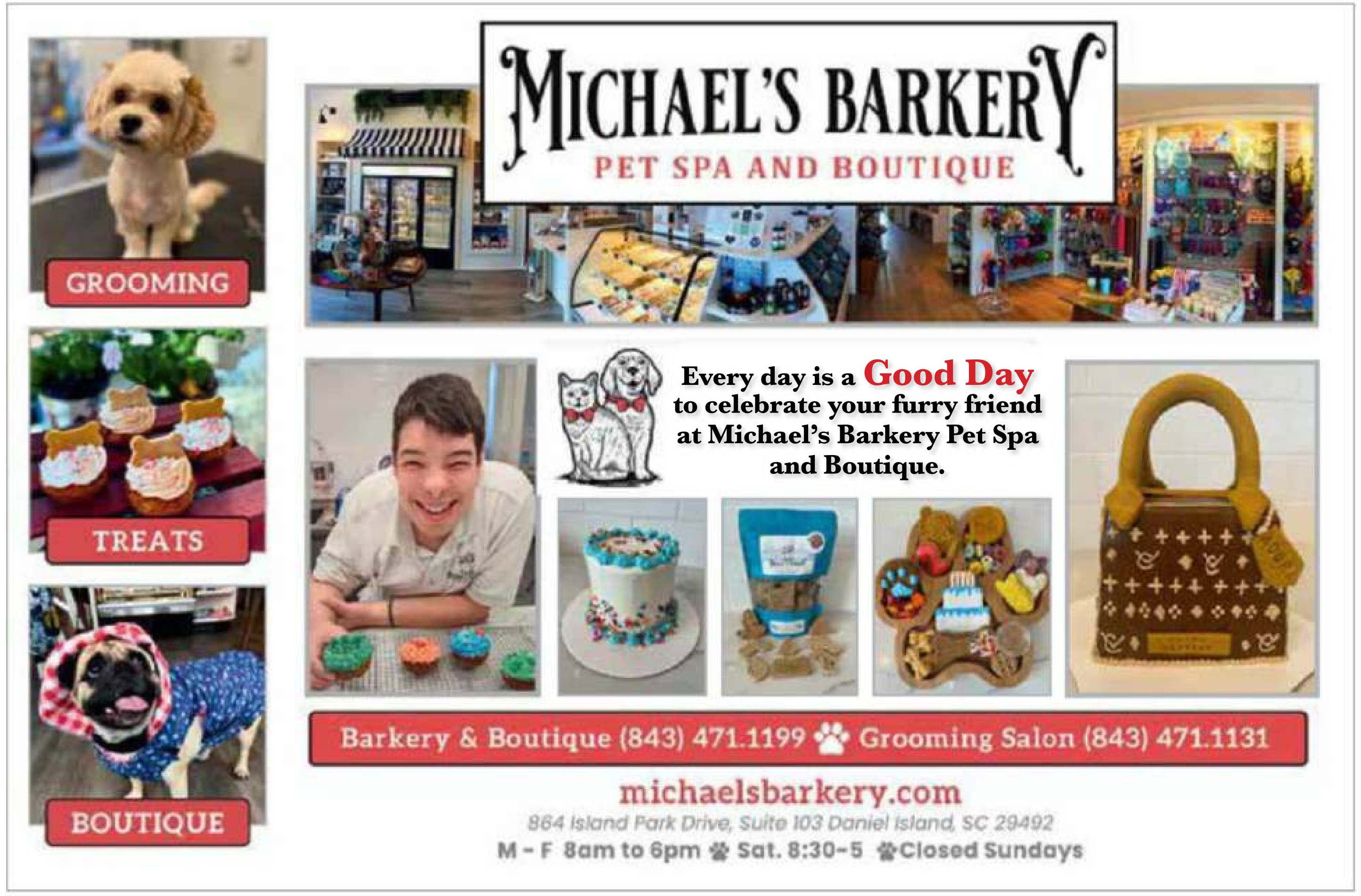

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You Say "Summerville," I Say "Football!"

Three cheers for the winningest coach ever

By TIM LOWRY

When the calendar turns from August into September, we people of the South Carolina Lowcountry, are fully aware that relief from summer discomforts are still months away. It will still be hot, mosquitoes will still swarm, and the humidity will continue to lay upon us like a wet blanket. However, these oppressive realities are mere inconveniences to the local citizenry. In the autumn of the year, to use a biblical phrase, the lines will nonetheless fall in pleasant places.

GREEN WAVE
SUMMERVILLE

"What lines?" you may ask. The lines on the old grid iron of McKissick Memorial Stadium in Summerville, South Carolina, because it's football season, of course! The story of the stadium's namesake, some people will argue, is the story of the town itself.

John McKissick was born in Greenwood, South Carolina, on September 25, 1926. His family moved to Kingstree when he was about 10 years old. It was there that he played Pee Wee Football, called Midget Football in those days. It was love at first hike. Years later, John recalled that his father wanted him to quit the game, get a job and earn money, but his mother recognized his great passion for sports and convinced her husband to let him play.

She had good instincts. John went on to distinguish himself on the high school team and then tried out for a sports scholarship to Clemson University. However, just five days after starting in the college program, he was drafted into the armed forces. John trained as a paratrooper, expecting to be part of the invasion of Japan with the 82nd Airborne, but the atomic bomb brought a quick end to the war allowing McKissick to remain stateside and continue his college career. Instead of returning to Clemson, he attended Presbyterian College, and eventually earned a degree in economics. However, football would be the only career John McKissick would ever pursue.

In July 1952, just one month after his marriage to his wife Joan, John was hired as head football coach of the Green Wave at Summerville High School. At that time, Summerville was a quiet little village with dirt streets, not particularly different from neighboring towns of similar size. However, that was about to change because Coach McKissick was at the forefront of a run that would be unequalled in the annals of football history.

His great success was probably due to two factors. First, he was quoted as saying, "We never went into a game that we didn't think we could win. And if you think you can, a lot of times you can." Second, his wife claimed that he was highly motivated to win because he really wanted to keep his job!

With quiet confidence, Coach McKissick began winning game after game. In his third

(Left): The John McKissick Memorial Stadium

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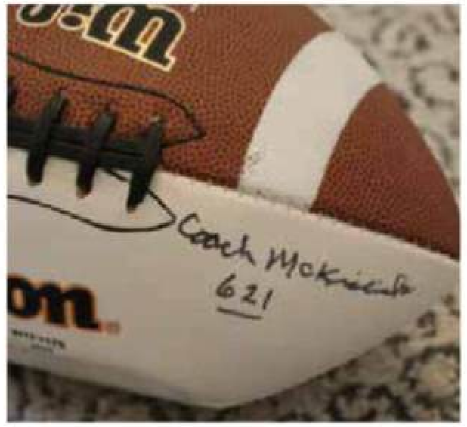

COACH JOHN MCKISSICK

McKissick Museum

(Top): Coach John McKissick; (Middle): Memorabilia on display at the McKissick Museum; (Right): The McKissick Museum in Summerville is open to the public before each home game.

year, he won his first state championship, and then another the very next season. Over the next six decades, the Summerville Green Wave won a total of ten state championships. Between 1978 and 1980, McKissick's team won 41 consecutive games, the longest winning streak in South Carolina. In 2012, Coach McKissick's players carried him off the field as they celebrated his 600th win. By the end of his career, he had tallied 621 wins to become the undisputed winningest coach at any level in the history of American football.

He was inducted into both the South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame and the National High School Sports Hall of Fame, was twice honored as National High School Football Coach of the Year and received commendations from four different U.S. presidents.

Many of his players went on to distinguished college careers and several played for the NFL. However, when Coach McKissick spoke about his players, he more often mentioned the pride he took in seeing teenage boys mature into industrious and successful auto mechanics, business owners, lawyers and doctors working in the Summerville community.

McKissick's dedication to his players crossed all barriers. One former player recalled the days of racially segregated high schools saying, "John McKissick was always at the Alston High School games. (Alston High School was the dedicated school for African American students.) He knew that the schools would eventually be integrated, and he was just waiting to incorporate black talent into his team. Race wasn't an issue."

It has been noted that he never cut a kid who tried out for his team. If they were dedicated to the sport, then Coach McKissick was dedicated to them. That meant he never missed a game, not even one, his entire career. He even coached a game the day after his own father died. It was not out of disrespect, but a lifelong commitment to his community. Other schools and universities tried to lure him away, but he stuck with Summerville until his retirement in 2015 after 62 seasons. And Summerville has stuck with him.

For many years, a special section of the town museum was dedicated to his legacy. After Coach McKissick's death in 2019, at the age of 93, the museum underwent a renovation. The collection was expanded and moved to a dedicated facility that sits adjacent to the football stadium in downtown Summerville where Coach McKissick spent countless hours investing his life into the life of the town. It opened in 2023.

Opening 90 minutes before every home game, the museum displays vintage jerseys, portraiture, championship game balls, playbooks, yearbooks and plenty of trophies. There is also an interactive touch screen, reproducing every page of Joan McKissick's scrapbook that chronicles every year of her beloved husband's entire career. People come from all over the country to learn about Coach McKissick, reminisce about their years as a Summerville Green Wave, and pay homage to the man who loved football, loved his players and loved his town. ■

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The 2025 Food & Wine Classic

Get to know the local culinary headlining this year's celebration

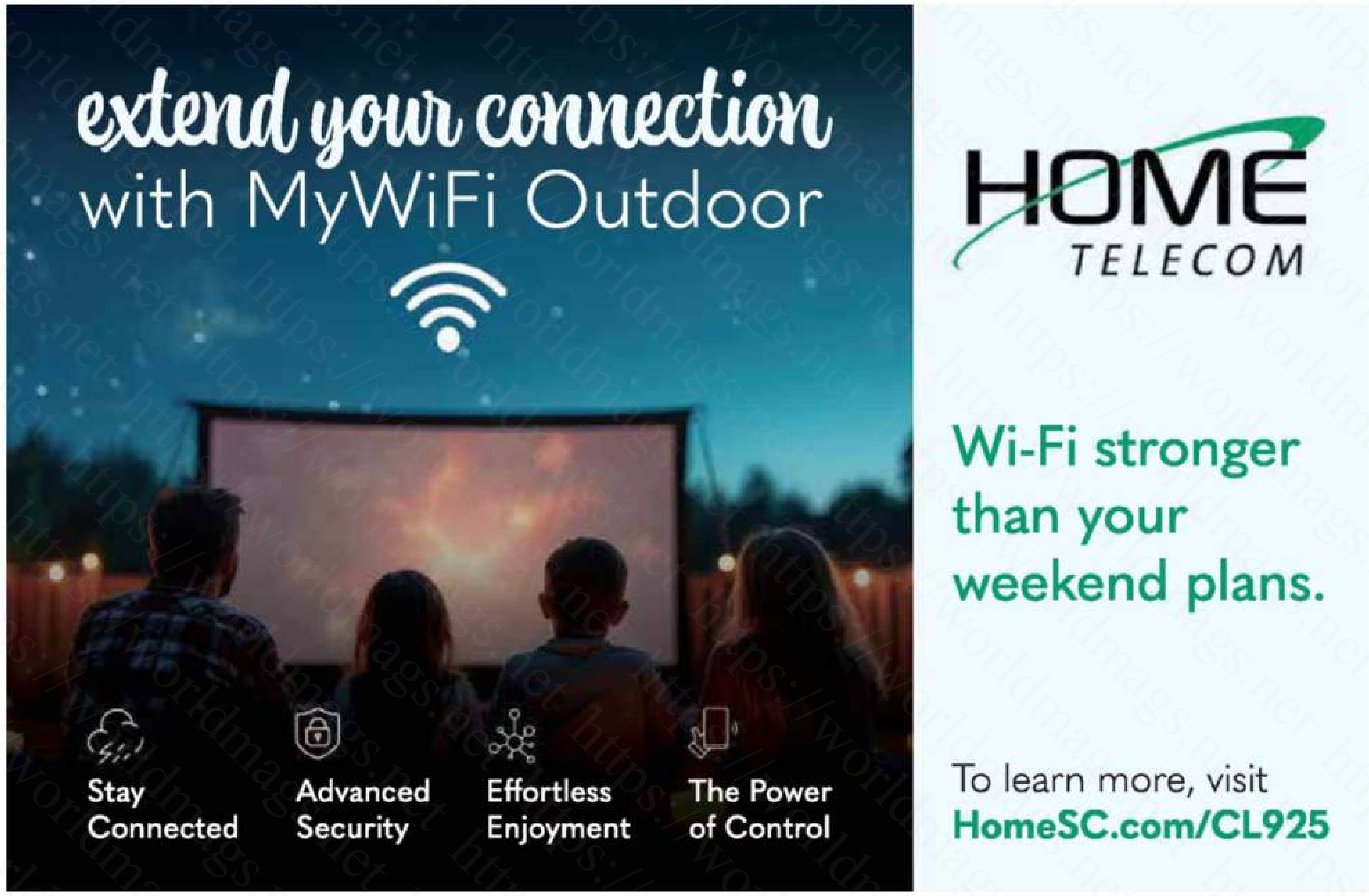
By SARAH ROSE » Photos by CAMERON WILDER

This fall, from November 14-16, the second annual Food & Wine Classic descends on the Charleston scene. The event boasts more than 50 cooking demonstrations and beverage seminars presented at various venues around town. Four “Grand Tastings” held beneath big tents at the Bus Shed invite guests to sample premier wines, handcrafted cocktails and bites, curated by over 100 brands and restaurants. Field trips include a tailgating party at the Dunlin Hotel in Kiawah River, an oyster roast and a crabbing excursion. These events, hosted by *Food & Wine*, *Travel + Leisure* and *Southern Living* magazines, will be led by an impressive lineup of global and local talent.

Enjoy “Grand Tastings” at the Bus Shed in Downtown Charleston.

One such homegrown hero is Femi Oyediran, sommelier and co-owner of Graft Wine Shop in Charleston, South Carolina, who discovered his passion for wine while working at The Charleston Grill. During his time there, he achieved the rare feat of passing the first three levels of the Court of Master Sommeliers within two years. He is also a two-time national finalist for the Chaîne des Rotisseurs Best Young Sommelier in America competition. In 2018, he was awarded *Wine Enthusiast* magazine's “40 Under 40”, and in 2019 was named Sommelier of the Year by *Food & Wine* magazine.

Another local celebrity participating in this year's Classic is Charleston-native James London. After graduating from the French Culinary Institute in New York and honing his skills in top restaurants from coast to coast, London returned to the Lowcountry. Since then, he has opened Chubby Fish, a dock-to-table seafood concept that has garnered a Best New Restaurant nod from *Bon Appétit* and ranked #7 on *Food & Wine*'s list of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Best Restaurants in the U.S. In 2024, London was also recognized as a finalist for Best Chef: Southeast by the James Beard Foundation.

As a pitmaster on the craft-barbecue scene, Hector Garate is bringing old-school woodfire techniques he learned during his childhood in Puerto Rico. In his quest to produce the finest barbecue for his award-winning brand, Palmira Barbecue, Garate sources sustainable farm-to-table smoked meats by partnering with Peculiar Pig and Creekstone Farms.

Also on the roster is Rodney Scott, who has been cooking whole-hog barbecue over wood coals since he was 11 years old. In 2017, he opened Rodney Scott's BBQ, which *Bon Appétit* named one of the 50 Best New Restaurants that same year. Awarded the Outstanding Chef: Southeast by the James Beard Foundation in 2018, Scott has since opened three locations across the South. His cookbook, "Rodney Scott's World of BBQ," was released in 2021.

Chef and co-owner of FIG and The Ordinary, Mike Lata, is also part of this year's lineup. Having earned the James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southeast in 2009, Lata was a semifinalist for Outstanding Chef in 2017 and 2018. His establishments have also received their own accolades. In 2018, FIG won James Beard Award for Outstanding Wine Program, and in 2019 and 2020 it was nominated for the Outstanding Restaurant Award. In 2013, The Ordinary was a James Beard finalist for Best New Restaurant.

Sean Brock is adding his touch on this year's Classic, too. In 2010, Brock won the James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southeast and has been a four-time finalist for Outstanding Chef, as well as a three-time finalist for Rising Star Chef. His first cookbook, "Heritage," is a *New York Times* bestseller and winner of the 2015 James Beard Award for American Cooking. Brock hosted season two of the Emmy Award-winning television show "Mind of a Chef," produced by Anthony Bourdain. In 2019 he released "SOUTH," which was nominated for a James Beard Award and became a *New York Times* bestseller. Brock's "ode to fast food" restaurant, Joyland, is a playful, nostalgic take on the chef's love for burgers, fries, fried chicken, breakfast biscuits and shakes.

Executive Chef Vinson Petrillo will also be sharing festive dining experiences inspired by his Italian heritage. Since The Restaurant at Zero George opened in 2012, Petrillo has shaped the establishment's exceptional culinary identity by championing the use of local and seasonal ingredients. In November 2023, Petrillo expanded his culinary repertoire with the opening of Costa, a coastal Italian restaurant where he also serves as executive chef.

Additionally, Carrie Morey, founder of the iconic Southern brand Callie's Hot Little Biscuit, will be dishing on her traditional recipes. As author of two cookbooks: "Callie's Biscuits and Southern Traditions" and "Hot Little Suppers," Morey also stars in "How She Rolls," a culinary docu-series about biscuits, business and balance.

After graduating from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, Marcus Shell spent years cooking in celebrated Boston restaurants. In October 2020, Shell moved to Charleston, where he worked at several restaurants, including Bistro 221, 82 Queen and 39 Rue de Jean. Now, as director of culinary operations for Uptown Hospitality Group and executive chef at Bodega, Shell will be serving up his secret sauce during the Classic.

Known as "The Casual Crabber," Tia Clark is excited to lead groups of 12-15 on off-campus crabbing experiences. During the excursions, Clark walks her guests through traditional techniques for crabbing. At the end of the trip, Clark teaches how to clean and bag the crabs they've caught so they can take them straight home or to a restaurant. For a fully immersive experience, Clark insists on her no cell phone policy. "That way folks can enjoy nature without distractions. My team and I will take the photos and videos."

While it's no secret that Charleston is the culinary epicenter of the South, there's a certain *je ne sais quoi* that happens when top chefs and mixologists from near and far collaborate in the spirit of gastronomy at the FOOD & WINE Classic. To learn more, visit foodandwineclassicincharleston.com. ■

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Working Inside the Abstract with Melissa Borland

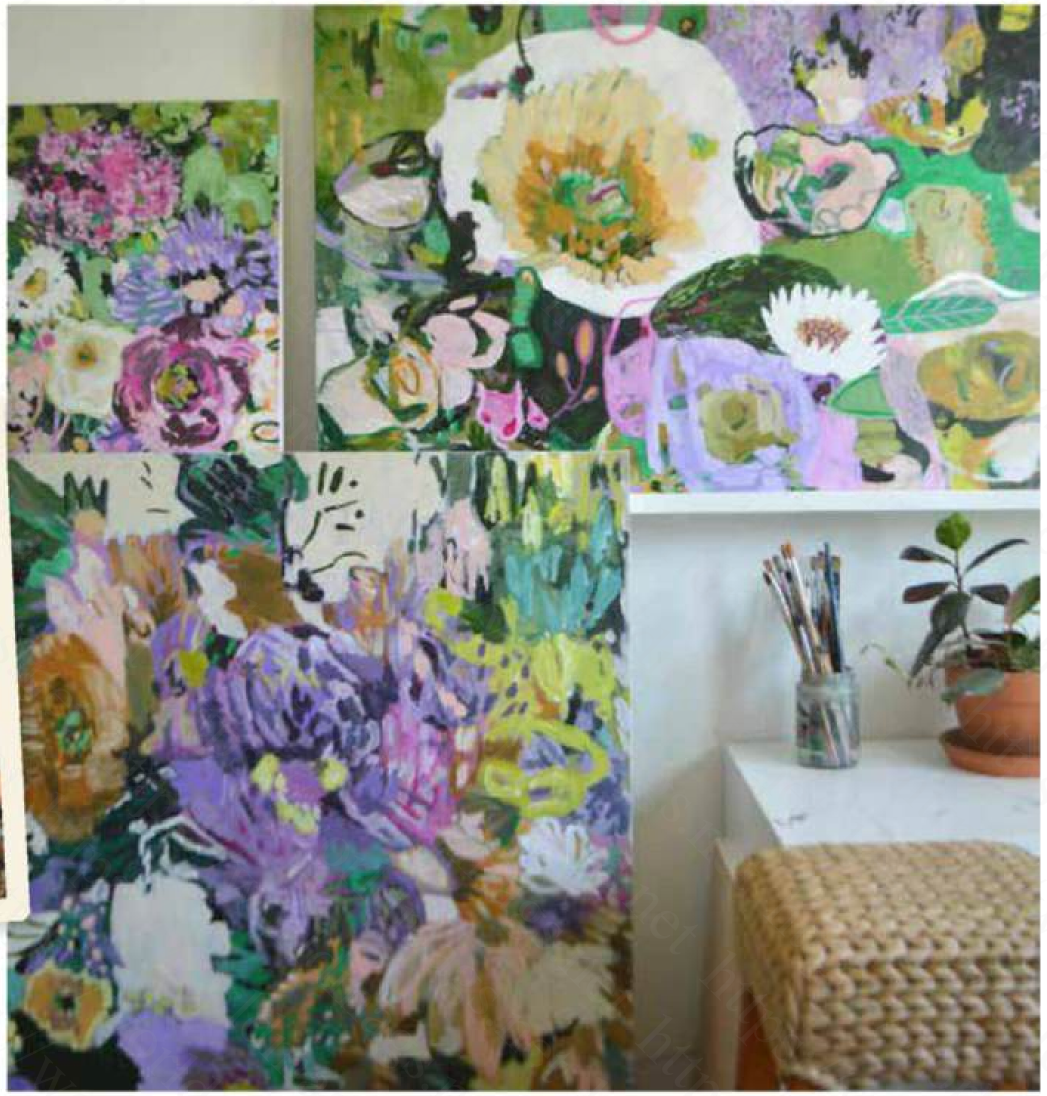
A palette without a plan

By SARAH ROSE

Since she was a child, Melissa Borland has had an affinity for the arts, experimenting with pretty much any medium that came her way. During her freshman year at the College of Charleston, she studied figure drawing under adjunct professor Tim Hussey, whose award-winning art and designs have been showcased in *Rolling Stone*, *GQ*, *The New York Times* and *Esquire U.K.*, to name a few. “I would say that class sparked my flame for creating,” she says.

Though Borland’s path took her in a different direction—studying French in La Rochelle, France, teaching elementary students at a Title I school in North Charleston, South Carolina, and training elementary teachers in the building blocks of pedagogy in Burundi, Africa, she found her way back to her passion for creativity.

When Borland returned from living overseas, she had the opportunity to learn from Diane and Eric Vincent, award-winning acrylics painters known for their exquisite attention to detail on a variety of subjects.



(Above): Melissa Borland surrounded by her art; (Right): Borland specializes in abstracts, florals and landscapes.

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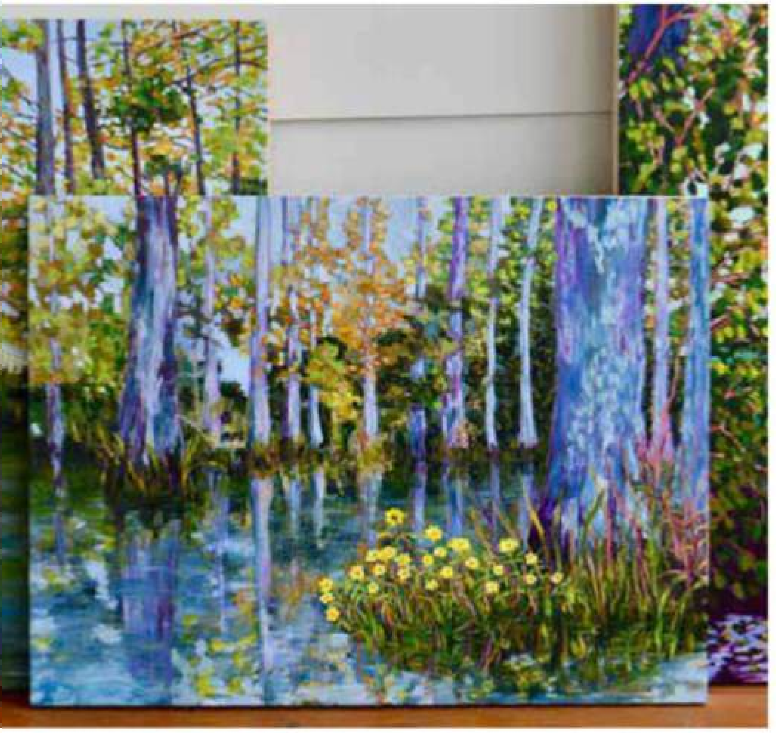


Life then took her on another course when she met her husband Evan and they had two boys. Borland put her art on the back burner so that she could devote more time to her children. During COVID-19, she realized she was ready to get back into her work. After taking a business class for artists, she launched Melissa Borland Artwork because, as she puts it, "I realized that life's just too short not to go for it."

Inspired by her world travels, nature and the beauty of the wild outdoors, Borland specializes in abstracts, florals and landscapes, using her favorite mediums: acrylics and oil pastels. "The objective of my paintings is to mirror the fragility of creation and its purpose to serve humankind by drawing connections between nature, its patterns and the meaningfulness of life itself," she explains.

Yet like many new business owners and budding creatives, Borland suffered from imposter syndrome. "I didn't have a degree in art or business, so what right did I have to start a business?"

To overcome that challenge, she started setting annual milestones for herself. "Every year I set a goal," she says. "The first year, I built a website and launched my Instagram account. In my second year, I studied local biodiversity so my landscapes would express the invaluable resources and ecosystems the Lowcountry offers. With my background in teaching, that was important to me."

For Borland, the wetlands are not just beautiful—they are essential. "They also act as natural sponges that trap precipitation and slowly release it. This action prevents floods and reduces erosion," she says. "Coastal wetlands currently provide the United States with $23.2 billion a year in storm protection services. Every day they are a force trying to work for our good. The marshes want to guard us from disasters. But will we let them?"

Borland's research further led to the creation of her first wetlands collection, which she debuted at the Daniel Island Fine Art Show in 2022. "It was exciting to participate in such a prestigious event so early in my career," she says.

At the show, Borland's bright, happy florals popped next to more serious oil paintings of marshland. Nevertheless, imposter syndrome reared its ugly head again. Not one to give in, she told herself, "I pushed it down by thinking, 'I deserve to be here. No wait, I am here!'"

In her third year, Borland began showing at events such as the Celadon Market, the Park Circle Art Walk and the Daniel Island Holiday Market to see which were the best fit. While schlepping, setting up, and breaking down can be a lot of work, she enjoys interacting with attendees. Another plus is that it helps build support for the local creative community by allowing her to get to know other artists. "When one of us wins, we all win," she says.

Now, Borland is exploring the idea of showing her work in galleries. "If I am able to be in one that I really love and we're a good match, that would be ideal," she says.

(Above, left): Borland studied local biodiversity so her landscapes would express the invaluable resources and ecosystems of the Lowcountry.

(Right): Borland's bright, happy florals pop off the canvas.

In the few short years since Borland began this new chapter in her career, she has clearly upleveled her definition of success.

From her home studio, Borland has developed a creative process that transcends space and time. "Working in the abstract, with a palette but no plan, I get lost in the moment. I find myself in a stream of consciousness where nothing else matters and the rest of the world doesn't exist. That's a big relief for my sanity," she adds.

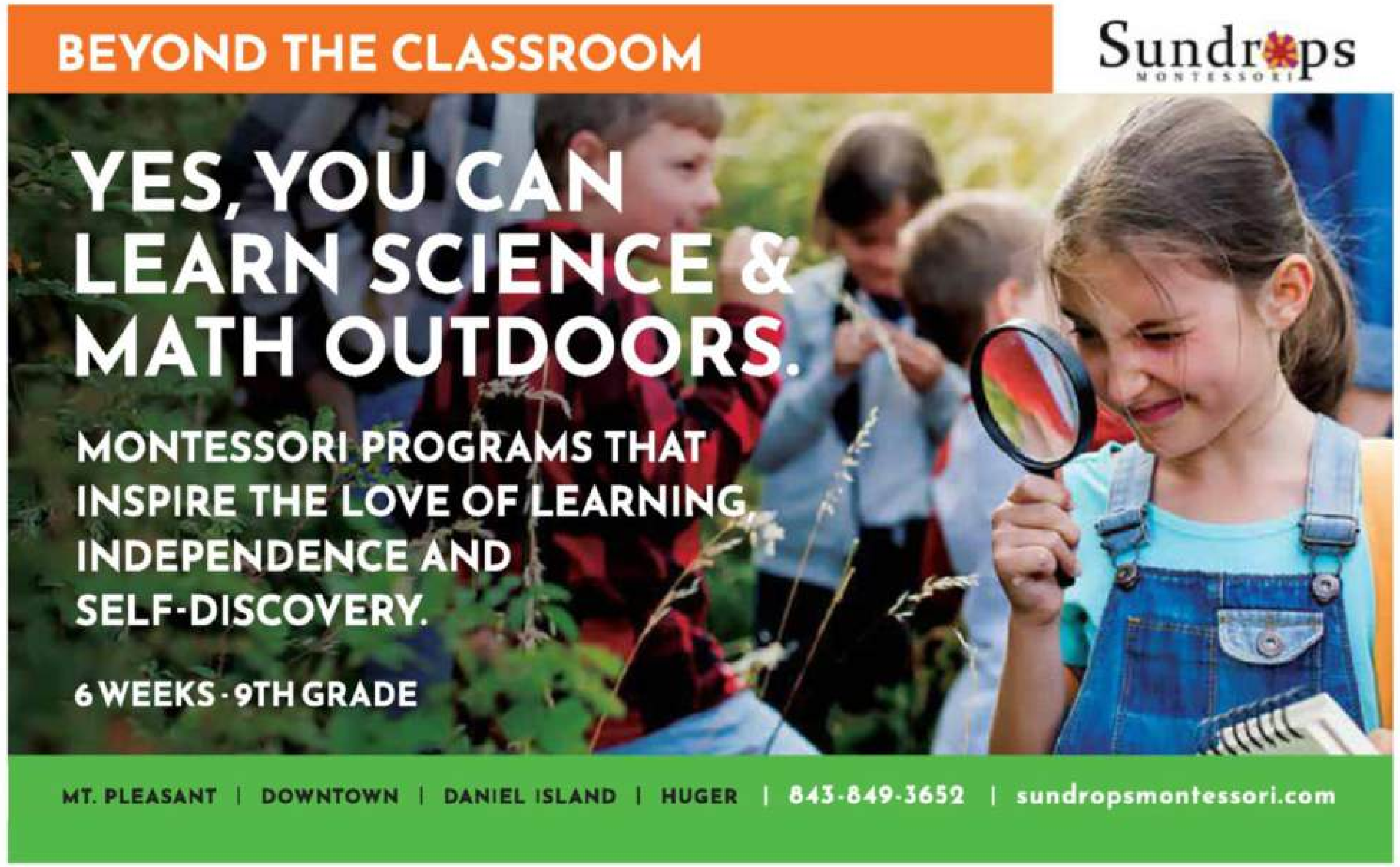
While Borland often paints multiple pieces at once, each one has its own timeline—whether several weeks or months. Currently, she is working on two series. One is of Cypress Gardens, which she started last December. "I wanted to paint that landscape in the Fauvist style because I don't think anyone else ever has done this," she explains. The other project is a collection of abstract florals, started in March. She hopes to finish both by the end of the year.

Yet for Borland, rushing is not part of the plan. "In our culture, a lot of value is placed on productivity and getting everything checked off the list. I feel that weight, too, but I've learned that one season cannot exist without the prior one. It's okay to have times in life when there is nothing seemingly happening on the outside. What is seen is not necessarily indicative of what is actually happening on the inside."

When Borland isn't creating, she enjoys hanging out with her husband and two boisterous boys, working in her garden, studying native wildlife, learning about other cultures and languages, and reading memoirs. ■

To browse Borland's collections, "Bring Beauty Inside," "Homage to Autumn," "Funky Floral Minis," "Summer Coastals," "Mix and Match Abstracts," "Peaceful Palette Coastals," "Wetlands Collection" and other commissions, visit melissaborlandartwork.com and follow her @melissaborlandartwork.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MELISSA BORLAND



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Peg Lahmeyer received the Order of the Palmetto earlier this year.

How Peg Lahmeyer Built The ARK

Providing much-needed relief to caretakers of Alzheimer's disease and dementia

By **SARAH ROSE**

AS A WORKING WIFE AND MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGERS AND A TODDLER, PEG LAHMEYER HAD HER hands full. To add to her plate, when her 90-year-old father passed away in 1990, she moved her mother, who two years prior had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, into the family home. Dedicated to her role as full-time caregiver, Lahmeyer often slept on the sofa to ensure her mother wouldn't wander out of the house late at night, ultimately quitting her job to be a full-time caregiver.

On a mission to provide hope and relief to other families living with dementia, Lahmeyer partnered with St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Summerville, South Carolina, to start The ARK, a self-sustaining outreach program, to meet the growing need for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) support. In its inaugural year of 1996, The ARK served 13 families with ADRD.

The following year, The ARK launched a satellite respite day program in rural St. George, South Carolina, to serve families in the Dorchester, Colleton and Orangeburg counties. In 2004, The ARK received grant funding for a bus that enabled more participants to attend its respite programs in the Summerville area.

By 2018, the congregation at St. Luke's had grown and The ARK needed to find a new home to expand services and staff. Lahmeyer said the program was fortunate to have five local investors help acquire a charming 1940s house once built by Summerville's late Mayor Berlin G. Meyers, which serves the needs of The ARK today.

In 2022, The ARK received grant funding and matching gifts to purchase a new van so that they could retire the nearly 20-year-old bus. Presently, The ARK operates a five-day-a-week program in Summerville with 10-12 participants per day and a one-day-a-week schedule in Harleyville with a maximum of 10 participants a day.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARK

PEG LAHMEYER
Executive Director and co-founder of The ARK of S.C.

CURRENT TOWN
Summerville, South Carolina

EDUCATION
Bachelor's degree in business administration, Huntingdon College

FAMILY
Married to Jim Lahmeyer, mother to five, grandmother to two more, pet-mom to two cats and one dog

HOBBIES
Traveling, reading mysteries and historical fiction, hiking, and spending time with family and her fur babies

The programs that The ARK provides are invaluable to the participants and their caretakers.

Peg Lahmeyer has been recognized wtih numerous awards and accolades over the years.

The ARK offers extensive support and guidance through the Neighborhood Outreach Alzheimer's Help project (NOAH). The program's services include training staff and volunteers in dementia care techniques, sharing educational materials and educational opportunities for caregivers and volunteers, advising and counseling as needs grow, assisting with identifying community partners and interest groups, and assessing immediate and long-term needs. Additionally, the project promotes social respite, caregiver support and consultation, community education, and mentorship for underserved communities in Dorchester, Charleston, Berkeley, Orangeburg and Colleton counties. "We couldn't have The ARK without NOAH steering the boat," Lahmeyer says, adding, "We understand the stress that can come with being the caregiver for someone living with Alzheimer's and we want them to know they are not alone."

Studies show that 40 percent of caregivers pass away before their loved ones because they are struggling to take care of their own needs as well as those of others. Although it can be hard to let go and leave the care in the hands of a stranger, it's crucial that the caregiver puts their oxygen mask on first before taking care of others. It's okay to take a break. The participants can come visit The ARK and stay to socialize with others. Caregivers can drop off and take a few hours a day for themselves, which can make a huge difference.

In addition to NOAH, The ARK's menu of services includes a certified course through the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Bureau of Justice that is dedicated to providing public safety executives, law enforcement, firefighters, EMS and others from the first responder community with the most current Alzheimer's and dementia training available. This no-cost Train the Trainer Program for Responding to Alzheimer's Disease: Techniques for Law Enforcement and First Responders, provides participants with up-to-date knowledge of Alzheimer's and dementia and teaches them how to interact with caregivers and people who have dementia. Once trained, officers are able to take the approved curriculum back to their departments and teach everyone on their team.

The ARK has worked with 28 different groups around the state, providing training and support, sharing advice and answering questions. To date, the nonprofit has served hundreds of families statewide, while also providing countless others across the country with access to information, referrals and free educational classes for caregivers as well as a Master Trainer program to teach professionals the curriculum.

"Because we are passionate about replicating this model, when we get requests from various communities, we encourage them to start their own programs by sharing our resources, teaching them how to onboard volunteers and write grants," Lahmeyer explains.

While The ARK was initially funded and is still supported by Brookdale National Group Respite Program, the nonprofit also hosts fundraising events each year. "Pull for The ARK" is a clay skeet shooting event with a Lowcountry Boil in October. For November's National Caregiver Month, The ARK honors caregivers with a Retro Bash. In March, a car show sponsored by Palmetto Primary Care has over 200 vintage cars on display. In June, the golf tournament, sponsored by Argos Cement, benefits the Harleyville satellite program. The McElveen 26th Annual Race for the ARK in August typically draws 350-600 runners and walkers. Dancing with The ARK Stars, presented by Innovative Resource Management, is the big event in May which raises about a third of The ARK's budget.

At that event this year, the governor presented Lahmeyer with the state's most prestigious civilian award, the Order of the Palmetto, given to South Carolinians who demonstrate extraordinary lifetime achievement, service and contributions of national or statewide significance. "For the first time in my life I was rendered speechless," Lahmeyer said. "It was the most humbling, awestruck moment and The ARK could not have achieved this almost 30 years of service without all our staff, donors and benefactors, volunteers and our family members who have all been involved."

To learn more about The ARK's services, call 843-471-1360 or email info@thearkofsc.com. Classes, videos and programs are also available at theartofsc.org and on Facebook at The ARK Alzheimer's Family Support Services. ■

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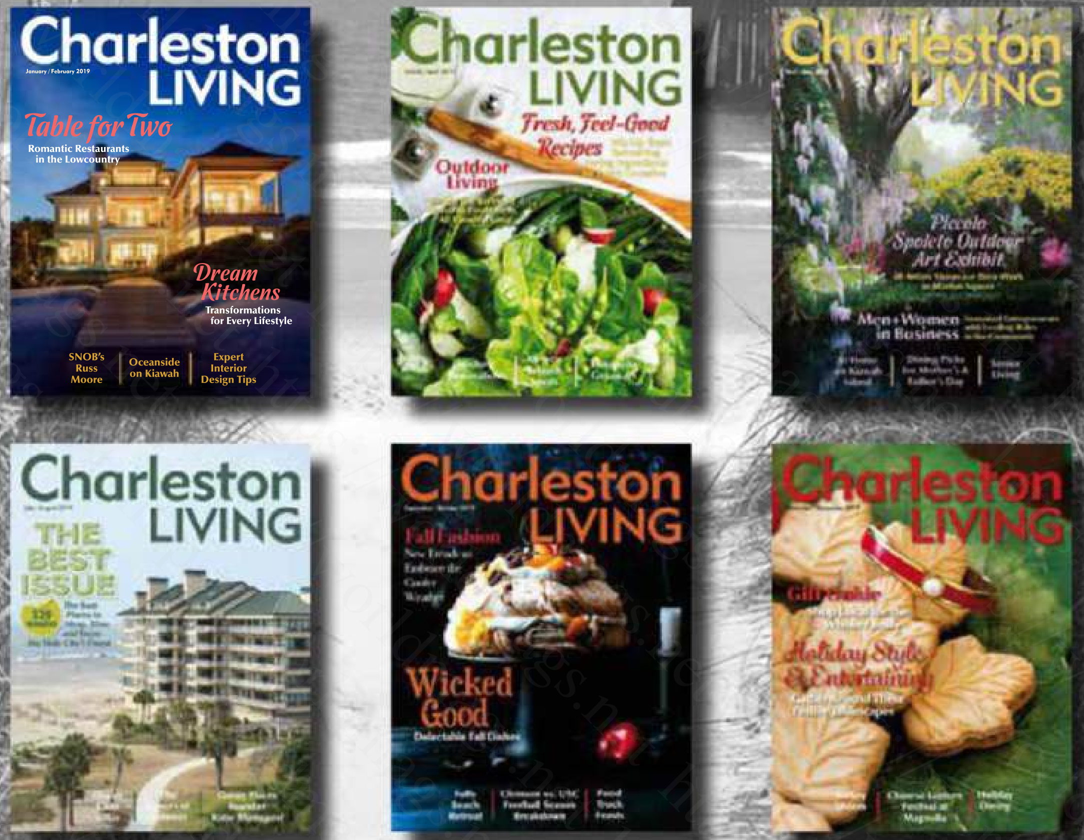

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The New Classic

A modern take on fall style

»

See page 60

PHOTO ALEECE SOPHIA

The Magic of Home Staging

The art and science of appealing to home buyers through strategic design

By JEN REED » Photos by CRYSTAL GLASS PHOTOGRAPHY

HOME STAGING GOES BEYOND SIMPLE DECORATION—IT'S A STRATEGIC MARKETING TECHNIQUE that turns a living space into a real estate product. This process involves not only design principles but also a deep understanding of buyer psychology. If you've spent any time in Charleston, you know that new home construction and resales are big business. But getting a home sold—and claiming top dollar— doesn't happen by accident. We talked with several home designers and staging experts to get some of their tried-and-true tips for creating an inviting space that will get your home sold.

Arranging seating around a fireplace or view can enhance a living room's appeal.

By viewing a home as a product, stagers can spotlight its best features and connect with the emotional and psychological needs of potential buyers.

Creating Emotional Connections

Imagine having just seven seconds to wow a potential buyer. Stressful, right? But that's the reality in home staging. It's not just about arranging furniture; it's about creating an emotional bond with buyers. People aren't just looking for a house; they're seeking a home that feels like a sanctuary.

Picture this: buyers envisioning cozy evenings in the living room, laughter around the dining table, or peaceful nights in a comfy bedroom. Achieving this means paying attention to every detail—soft textures, soothing colors and perfectly placed decor all come together to create a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Successful staging also leaves room for buyers to project their own lives into the space. It's about balancing a suggested lifestyle with an open canvas for their dreams. The goal? To turn a house into a potential home filled with promise.

Making a Great First Impression

First impressions are everything in home staging. When buyers step through the door, every detail counts. This initial encounter sets the tone for their entire visit and lingers in their minds long after they've left. A well-staged home speaks volumes about its quality and value right from the start.

The entrance should be welcoming, creating a smooth transition into the home. The right mix of lighting, color, and decor can create harmony and balance, making buyers feel instantly at home. It's all about crafting an experience that feels both aspirational and attainable, where buyers can see themselves living and thriving.

Attention to detail is crucial. From the scent in the air to the texture of the surfaces, everything contributes to a positive, lasting impression. Home staging here isn't just about looking good—it's about strategically tapping into the psychology of attraction and desire.

Highlighting the Best Features

Think of home staging like telling a great story. It's about showcasing a property's best features while downplaying its flaws. This isn't about deception; it's about focusing the buyer's attention on what makes the home special.

For instance, if a room is small, light colors and mirrors can make it appear larger. If there's limited natural light, using multiple light sources can brighten things up. Even outdated elements can be balanced with modern accessories to give the space a refreshed feel.

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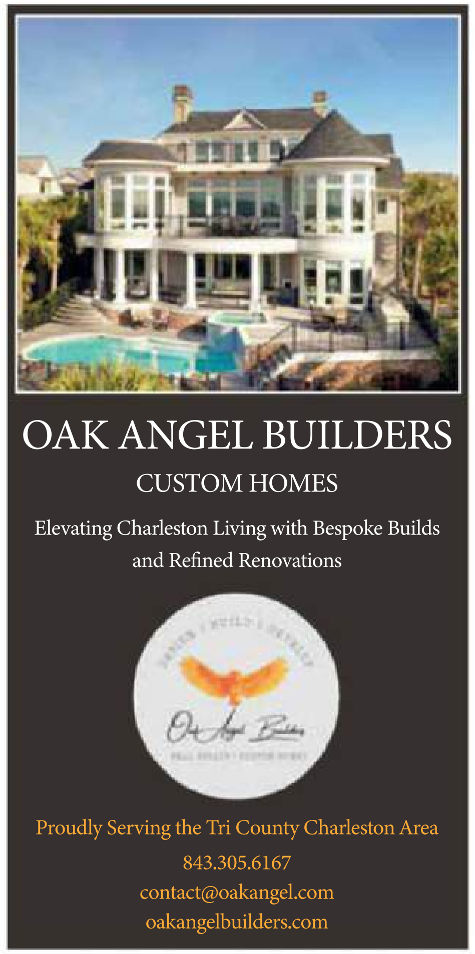

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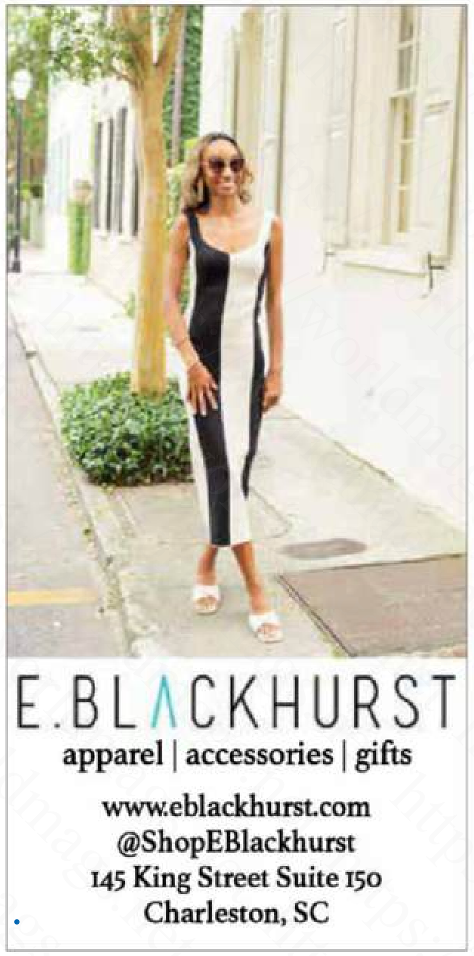
(Above): The kitchen has minimal staging, allowing buyers to envision their own decor in the space.



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By emphasizing unique features like a beautiful view or an elegant fireplace, staging can create a visual hierarchy where the positives shine and the negatives fade into the background. This approach helps buyers focus on the home's potential and envision a future that overshadows any imperfections.

Maximizing Perceived Value and Space

Maximizing perceived value and space is a cornerstone of effective home staging. It's not just about cosmetic tweaks; it's about presenting a space in the best possible light. Decluttering is the first step, creating a blank canvas that highlights the home's architecture and dimensions.

Thoughtful furniture placement defines spaces, creates flow, and showcases functionality. For example, arranging seating around a fireplace or view can enhance a living room's appeal. The right color palette can make rooms feel larger and more inviting, while effective lighting can highlight the best features and set the mood.

These techniques help buyers see the true potential of their investment. A well-staged home appears spacious, well-maintained, and thoughtfully designed, making it feel like a dream home.

Broadening Appeal with Neutralization

Neutralization is all about making a home appeal to a wide range of potential buyers. It involves toning down personal tastes and creating an inviting backdrop that resonates with everyone.

Neutral colors like beige, gray, and cream are your best friends here. They make spaces look larger and brighter while providing a versatile canvas for buyers to imagine their own decor. Beyond color, neutralization extends to furnishings and decor, replacing bold or niche items with more understated pieces.

This strategy includes decluttering and rearranging furniture to maximize space and flow, making the home more inviting and easier to navigate. Ultimately, neutralization helps buyers see themselves in the space, enhancing the home's marketability.

Wrapping Up

Effective home staging is both an art and a science, turning a home into a marketable product by appealing to buyers' emotions and perceptions. It goes beyond aesthetics, tapping into the psychology of buyers to create spaces that not only look appealing but feel right. ■

Flowertown Bound

Flowertown Garden Center encourages customers to see opportunities in the fall garden

By DANA W. TODD

"DON'T WAIT UNTIL NEXT SPRING TO ENJOY VIBRANT COLOR in the garden again," says Charlene Moore, co-owner of Flowertown Garden Center. With 15 years of experience leading Summerville's most respected garden center, Moore knows how to keep landscapes lively well beyond summer, and helps Flowertown's customers extend the growing season with curated plant options.

For those who delight in the bold hues of spring and summer blooms, Moore offers expert advice: The fall coastal landscape still has plenty to offer. A wide variety of colorful plants thrive through October and even into November if nighttime temperatures remain mild. Plus, planting in the fall gives trees and shrubs a valuable root-boosting head start by encouraging strong root growth on which the plant can build in future seasons.

"Fall is an optimum planting time in the Lowcountry, since our ground never freezes," says Moore. "Southern gardeners have a unique opportunity to extend the blooming season. By planting in September, October and November, fall plants will overwinter, with soil temperatures warm enough that roots are given a chance to grow and establish themselves. They will put all their energy into rooting so when spring comes around, they can turn their focus solely to blooming and foliating."

Perennials, shrubs and trees that bloom in the fall can be planted throughout the Lowcountry's mild autumn, keeping the yard vibrant until the holiday season. Flowering perennials, such as Gaillardia—also known as Blanket Flower—thrive in a coastal environment, with long-lasting bicolor blooms in red and yellow. Similarly, pink Beach Rose blooming shrubs tolerate the strong winds typical in maritime environments. Several cultivars and colors of Lantana will bloom in the Charleston fall garden, as will Pink Muhly Grass and Oleander. Although not colorful, the sword-like leaves of Yucca shrubs add eye-catching drama to the fall landscape, are low maintenance, and handle heat and drought well.

Several trees that produce colorful flowers in the fall are hardy and adaptable to the coastal

Flowertown owners, Charlene and Paul Moore, have been serving Summerville and the surrounding area for 15 years.

PHOTOS LEA AUSTEN PHOTOGRAPHY

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Flowertown Garden Center has 13 themed specialty gift shops spread over its 3-acre site.

area's salty spray and brackish water, such as Southern Magnolia, Wax Myrtle, Red Maple and Black Gum. "As native trees, they require less water and fertilizer and have fewer pests than non-native species," Moore explains.

Wandering through Flowertown's grounds to find the perfect fall specimens feels like a stroll through a botanical garden full of possibilities, and not simply a retail space. Thoughtfully arranged displays showcase a stunning variety of unique plant material, trees, fountains, pottery and much more—all carefully designed to help customers bring beauty and creativity to their outdoor spaces.

Flowertown's huge inventory of garden art, which includes statues, wrought iron and fountains, adds another element of interest to the fall landscape, filling in where deciduous shrubs may be beginning to die back. Flowertown's 13 themed specialty gift shops also house a wide variety of unique finds, some of which can be incorporated as conversation-starters in the landscape.

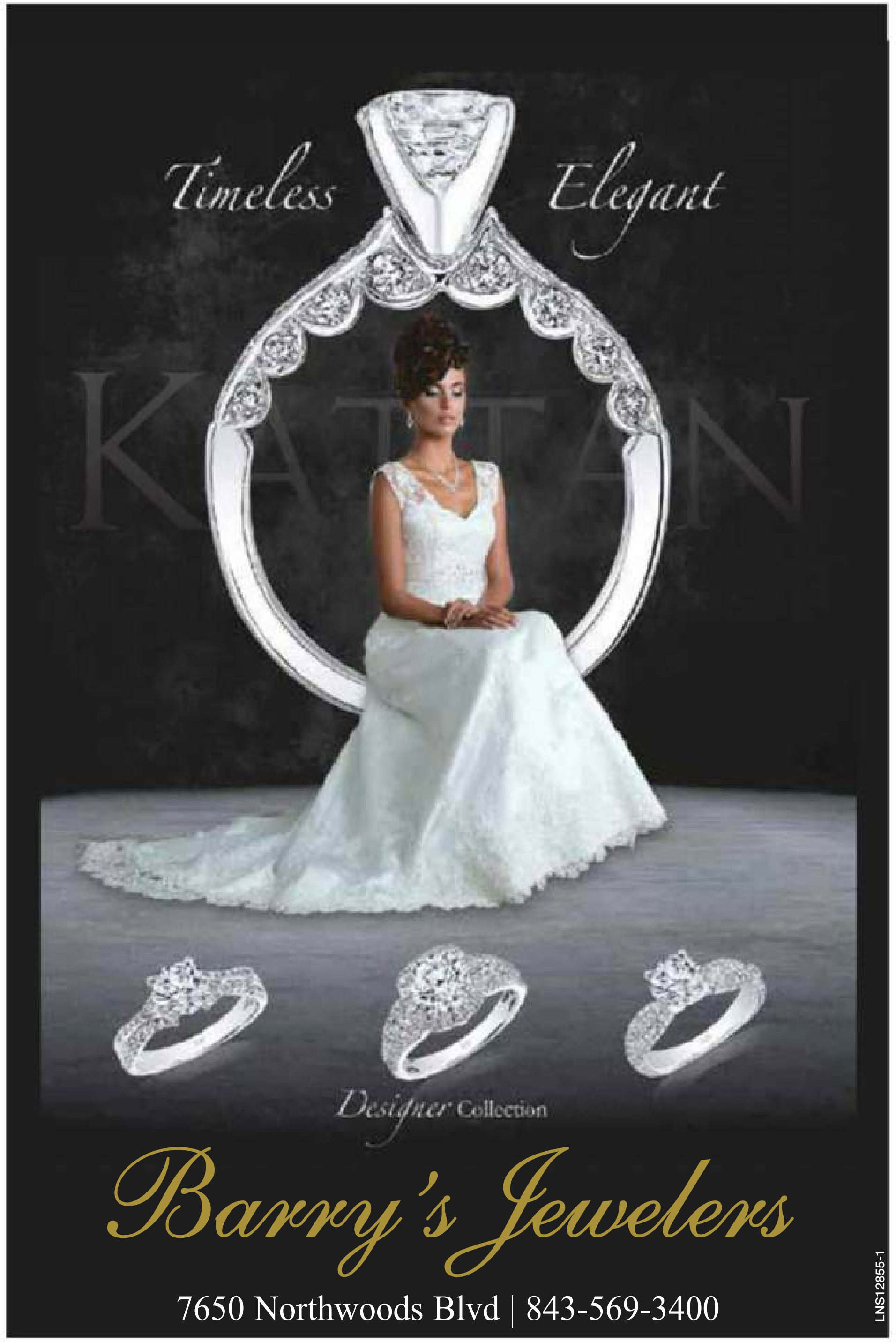
Colors pop in the fall garden thanks to Oleander, and Gaillardia.

PHOTOS LEA AUSTEN PHOTOGRAPHY; SHUTTERSTOCK

If what works best is a pop of color through a carefully placed and curated combination pot, Moore has the answer. She personally designs stand-alone pots full of seasonally appropriate combinations of flowers for her customers who request the service. "Just bring me your containers, and I will either advise you on what to plant for a showy fall masterpiece, or I will fill one or more containers with a custom design that you can plug into your landscape or place on the porch," says Moore. This popular bespoke service allows Flowertown's customers to experience an expert's horticultural touch at their homes while increasing curb appeal.

Flowertown is a one-stop shop for plants, garden décor, specialty gifts and landscaping supplies. Spread across three cultivated, beautifully maintained acres, the garden center's inventory is expansive, making it easy to find something on every gardener's wish list. ■

Visit Flowertown Garden Center at 410 E. 5th N St. in Summerville or at flowertowngardencenterllc.com.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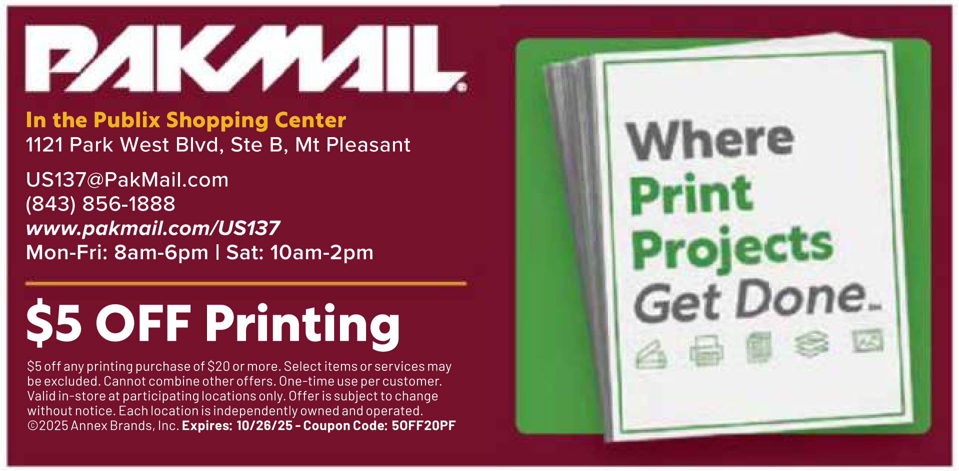
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Shoes $38; Reinvented Upscale
Resale, 847 Savannah Hwy,
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Robert Barakett SS Georgia Crew T
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$625; all at M. Dumas & Sons,
294 King St., Charleston.
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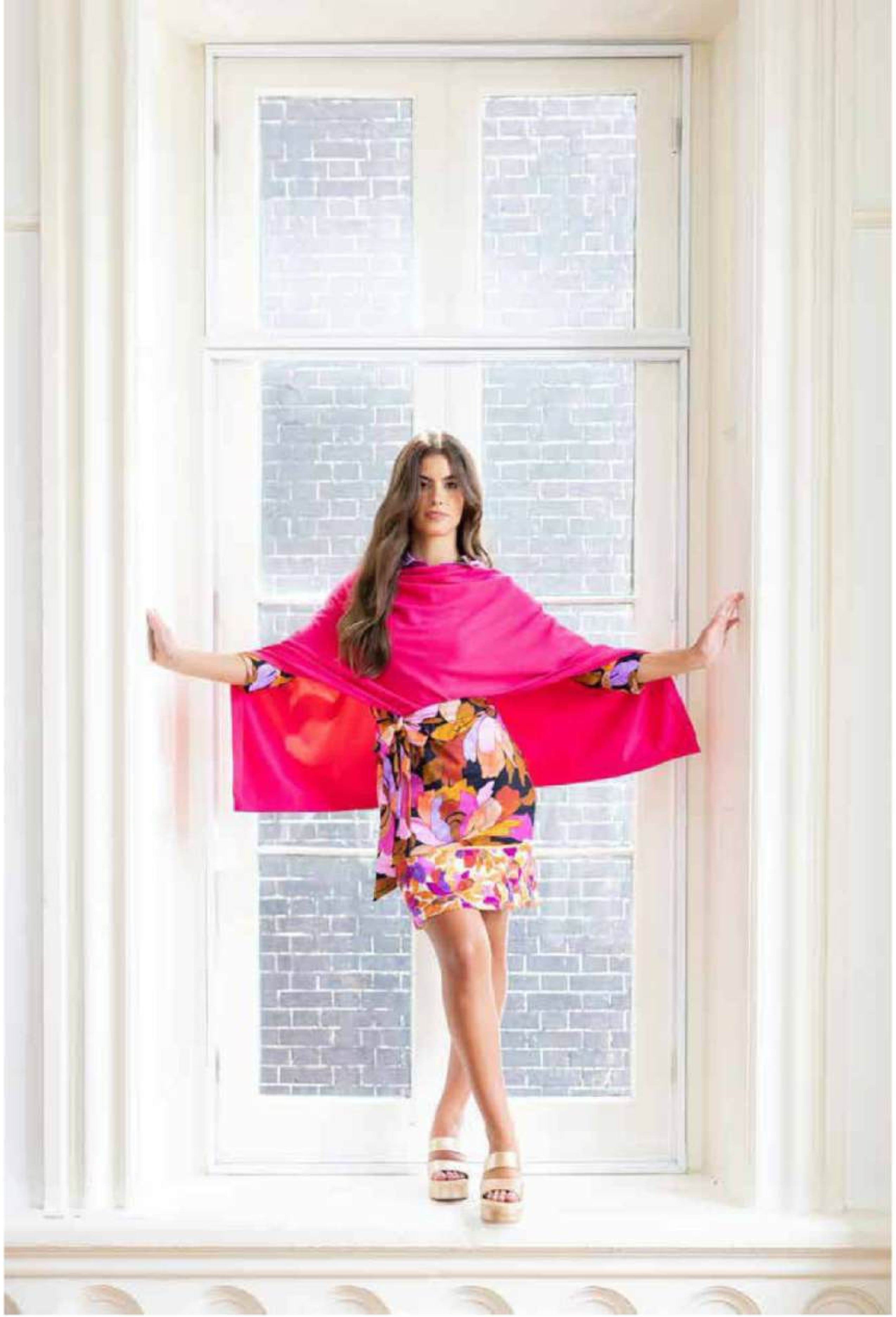
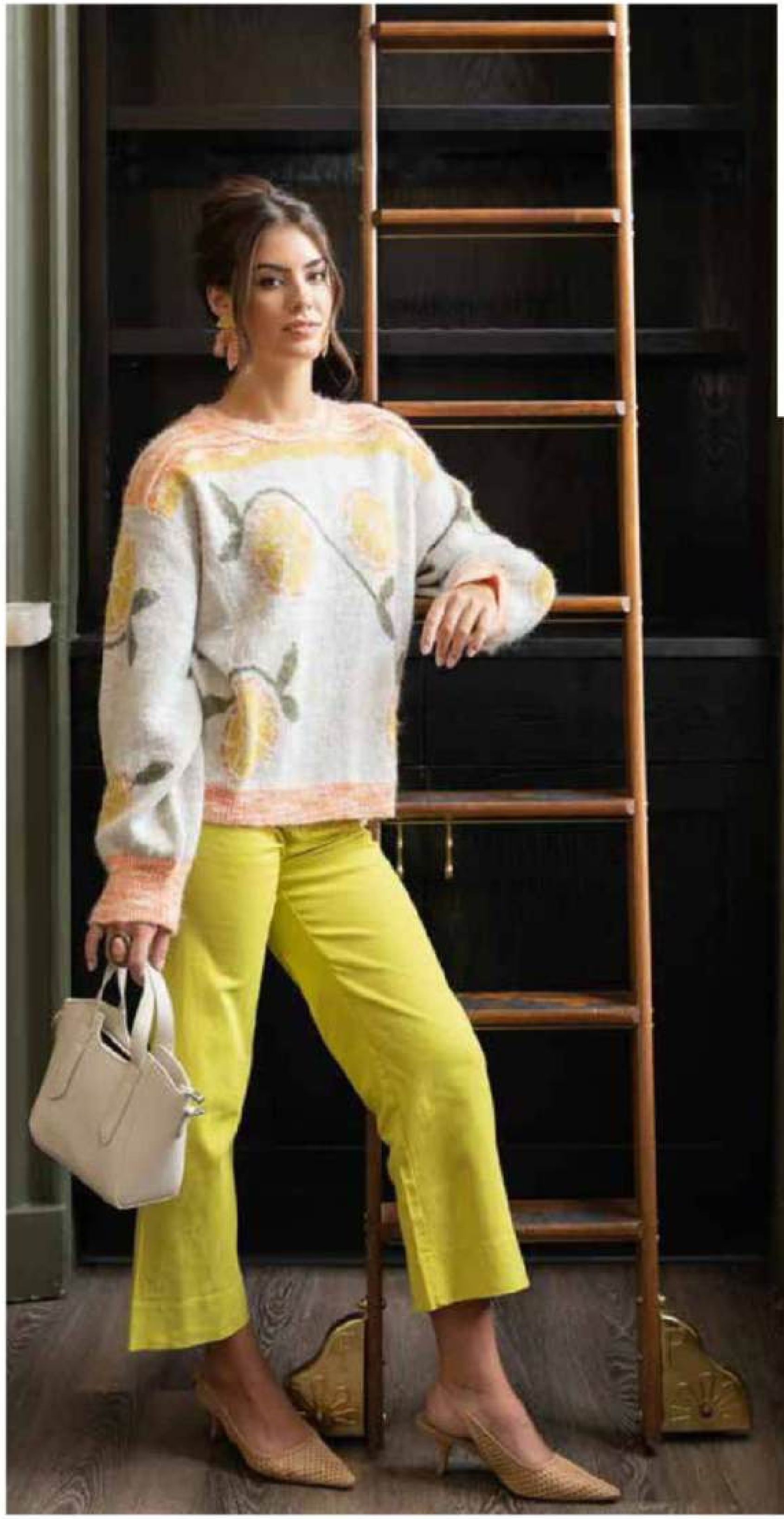
Fashion Direction/Stylist: Bianca Gardner @biancathelook
Hair and Makeup Artist: Rosa D Martinez @therosamartinez
Hair and Makeup Assistant: Ana Paula Reichart @charleston_chica
Models: Katie Lewis & Andrew Tysinger, Directions USA (directionsusa.com)
Production Assistant: Avery Hanson
On Location: Brasserie La Banque (brasserielabanque.com)



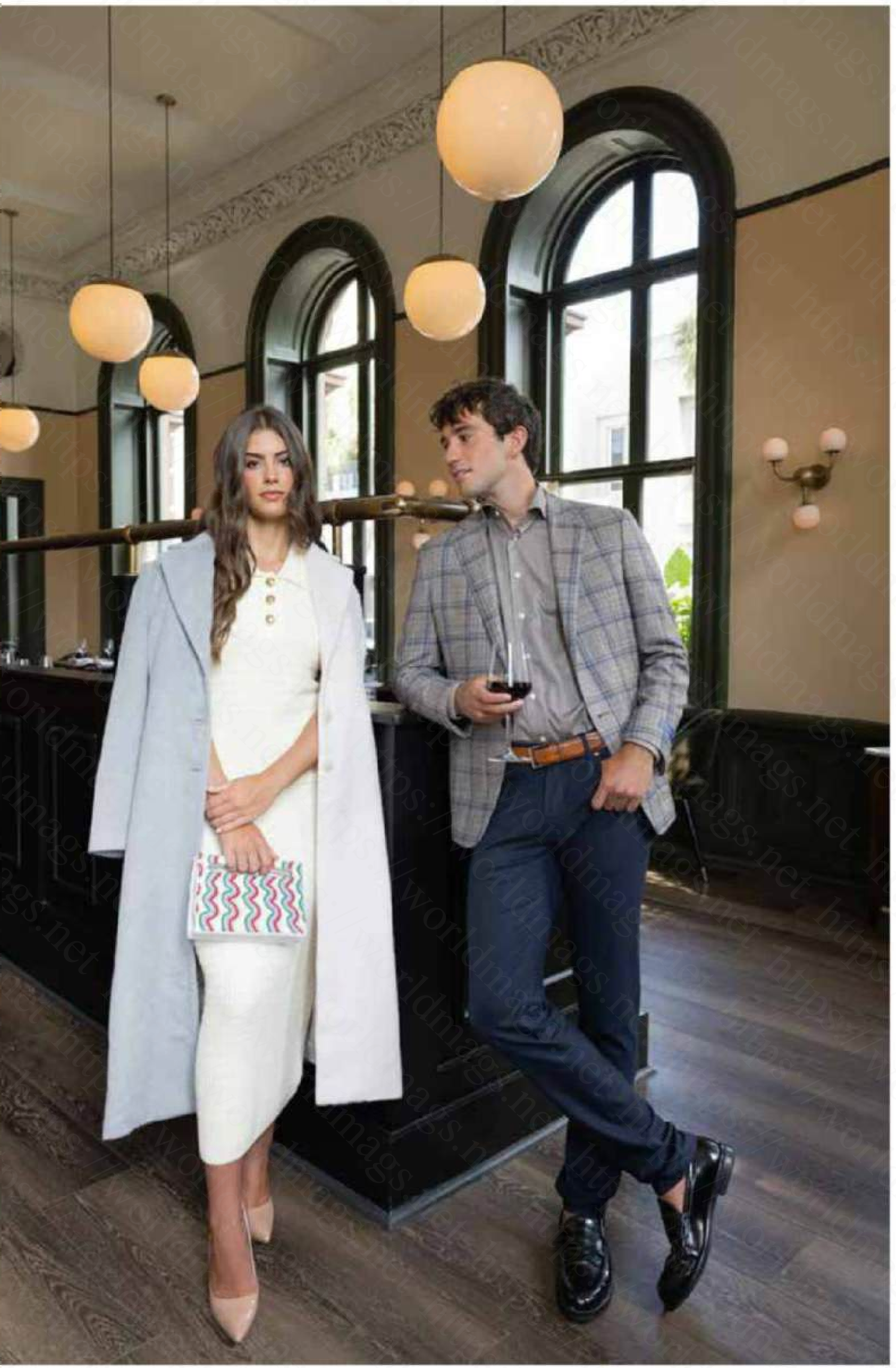
Cherry Poncho $79, Donna Dress $175;
all at Jean Pierre Klifa 214 King St, Charleston.

Find Your Wings Earrings $24.99, Everlyn Heel $89.99;
all at E. Blackhurst 145 King St, Charleston.

Ring $24; Reinvented Upscale Resale, 847 Savannah Hwy, Charleston.

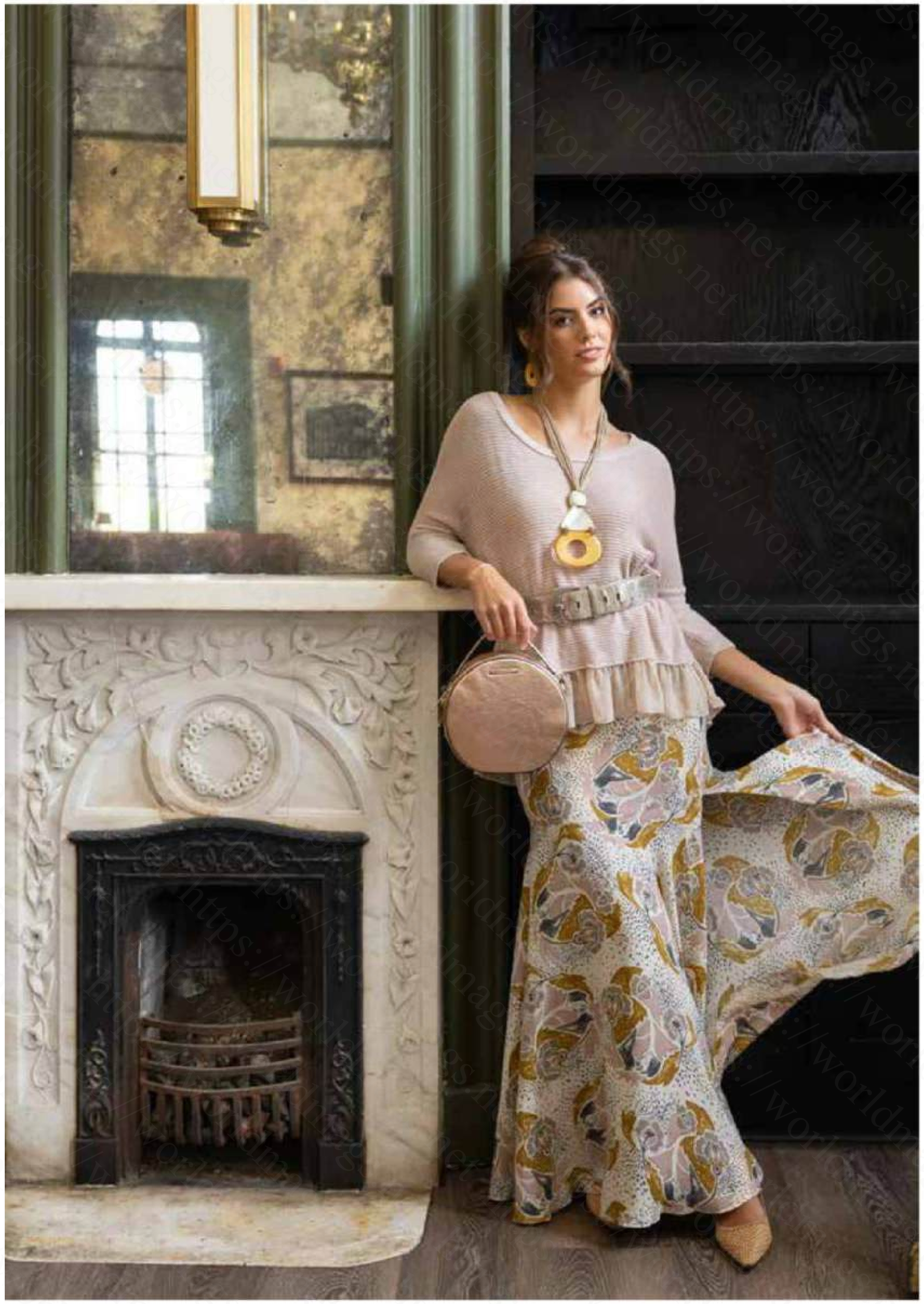


Beth Ladd Shrimp Earring $59.99, Sweet Citrus Sweater $69.99, Pocket Pant $54.99, K Carr Satchel $44.99; all at Aiden Lane, 644 Long Point Rd, Mount Pleasant. Stylist's shoes.



Womens: Endless Rose - Ivory Knit Helmsley Dress $148, Hand Beaded Disco Wave bag $178, Endless Rose - Arabella Jacket $198; all at James Ascher, 515 East Bay St., Charleston. Model's own shoes.

Mens: Castangia Sport Coat Taupe Plaid $3,995, Eton SS Flannel Shirt $280, Marco Pescarolo Nerano Pant Navy $1045, Magnanni Vega Belt $175; all at M. Dumas & Sons, 294 King St, Charleston. Model's own shoes.



Tan Tunic $24, Snake Print Belt $18, Free People Skirt $30, Necklace & Earring Set $65, Brahmin Rose Gold Purse $150; all at Reinvented Upscale Resale, 847 Savannah Hwy, Charleston. Stylist's shoes.

St. Phillips Island is a fomer private island that can only be accessed by boat.

Go **Explore!**

Locals take back the Lowcountry this fall

By PAMELA JOUAN

As fall settles over the Lowcountry, a hush replaces the summer buzz. The tourists have gone, the air has softened, and the golden light of autumn invites us to slow down and look closer. It's the perfect time to reclaim Charleston—our beaches, marshes, trails, and tucked-away treasures. This season, we explore the beauty in our own backyard, where hidden gems and nature's finest moments await just around the corner.

Take back nature—

St. Phillips Island at Hunting Island State Park

Just off the coast of Beaufort, South Carolina, the 4,680-acre St. Phillips Island remains one of the Lowcountry's best-kept secrets—accessible only by boat and teeming with unspoiled beauty. Once the private refuge of billionaire conservationist Ted Turner, who bought it in 1979 to prevent development, the island is now managed by South Carolina's state park system alongside neighboring Hunting Island.

"Fall is one of my absolute favorite times of the year on St. Phillips to explore the island's vast trail system," says Operations Manager John Alexander. "It is made up of ancient dune systems nestled in the heart of an old-growth maritime forest. Something incredibly rare to find in South Carolina." The island's unique ecology earned it designation as a National Natural Landmark. Birders will be in awe: up to five million migratory birds pass overhead nightly along the East Coast flyway. The cooler weather also means wildlife is more active.

Coastal Expeditions exclusively offers ferry service and small-group guided trips, limited to just 28 people. "It feels like you have the entire island to yourself," Alexander adds. "A rare opportunity to disconnect from the crowds and reconnect with nature. My tip: Keep your head on a swivel, stay curious, and be ready to explore."

At nearby Hunting Island State Park, Park Manager Kirby Brady recommends beachcombing, forest hikes, and hands-on nature programs from fishing clinics to hands-on art sessions. "As an overnight guest, renting a campsite or cabin becomes especially more comfortable, as the air is less thick and the insects begin to fade. Autumn here offers more than a destination—it's a peaceful escape that refreshes the spirit."

For more info and times go to:
southcarolinaparks.com/hunting-island/st-phillips-island

PHOTOS SOUTHCAROLINAPARKS.COM

Hunting Island State Park includes 5000 acres of beach, marsh and maritime forest.

Check out the boneyard beach at Botany Bay.

Take back the wild—
Botany Bay Beach in Edisto

Erosion has sculpted Botany Bay Beach into a hauntingly beautiful 'boneyard' of sun-bleached trees, their limbs frozen in the surf. In fall, the crowds thin and the raw magic of this place reveals itself. "Botany Bay becomes very quiet after the rush of summer dies down," says Erin Weeks, Media & Communication Coordinator at South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. "The beach changes shape as marsh relics become exposed, bringing in resting and feeding shorebirds." It's also a fantastic spot for surf fishing. Explore it at low tide, because at high tide it's inaccessible.

Before heading out, always check the deer and dove hunt schedule—when the park is closed—however it is always open to the public on Sundays. Check here for the calendar and free public programming throughout the fall at: public-lands-scdnr.hub.arcgis.com/pages/botany-bay-hp-wma

Take back your legacy—
Hike and bike in the ACE Basin

This fall, trade crowds for quiet and explore the ACE Basin—one of the largest undeveloped estuaries on the East Coast. Named for the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers, the basin is a breathtaking blend of natural beauty and cultural history. Author Mary Alice Monroe chose it as the setting for "Where the Rivers Merge" for good reason: it's a place where wildlife and stories thrive.

"Many South Carolinians think of the ACE Basin as pristine wilderness—and while it does represent one of the largest intact ecosystems on the Atlantic coast, it's far from an untouched landscape," says Brianna Goodwin, ACE Basin volunteer coordinator at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. "Human hands have shaped the ACE Basin for millennia, ranging from Indigenous peoples who left massive shell rings to the enslaved Africans who were forced to dig and maintain vast acres of rice fields. These echoes of human management are still visible—quite literally—in the ACE Basin. Today, a diverse group of private and public landowners work together to steward these lands primarily to conserve beautiful coastal landscapes, and the wildlife and traditions they support."

Meaning: This is their gift to you.

Need a place to start? Check out the ACE Trail at acetrail.org—three fairly flat miles ideal for walking, biking, general exercise, and birdwatching. As with Botany Bay, be sure to check the scdnr.org calendar for days when the area is closed for hunting.

Take back the day outside—
Kiawah Beachwalker Park & Picnic Area BBQ

"As fall settles in, Kiawah Beachwalker Park becomes a peaceful retreat where the beauty lingers long after the summer crowds have gone," says Beachwalker Park Manager Charlie Vance. "The days may be shorter, but there's still plenty to enjoy—from sun-filled beach strolls and dolphin strand feeding at Captain Sam's Inlet, to laid-back family picnics with stunning views of the Kiawah River."

Beauty around every bend in the ACE Basin.

PHOTOS JULIA LAKE SHEALY

Accessible grill area at Kiawah Beachwalker Park

Majestic Kaiwah Beachwalker Park.

BEACHWALKER PARK PHOTOS CHARLESTON COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION; KEEN EYE MARKETING
STONO MARKET PHOTO MOLLY JOSEPH PHOTOGRAPHY

So do just that. Bring the family or a group of friends. Gather supplies intentionally and fire up one of the grills at the riverside picnic area for a feast to complement the view. Here, even a simple barbecue feels magical.

This stretch of beach is more than beautiful—it's welcoming. Dogs are treated like guests of honor, from a treat at the gatehouse to off-leash freedom from October through February where the shore is their playground. Vance reminds us that cleanup is a breeze thanks to the park's convenient Dog Washing Station.

Whether it's family, food, furry friends—or all three—Kiawah Beachwalker Park is where fall days are meant to linger. For more info and times go to: ccprc.com/1411/Kiawah-Beachwalker-Park.

Take back local ingredients—
Stono Market & Tomato Shed Cafe in Wadmalaw

"Fall is the perfect time to visit us. The pace slows down, the air gets crisp, and everything feels a little more rooted in tradition and flavor," says owner Barbara Ambrose. "Even though we're right on Main Road, our café still feels like a step back in time: Lowcountry—warm, welcoming, grounded. After the busy summer season, it becomes a space where locals can slow down and enjoy a relaxed lunch surrounded by familiar faces. No rush, no fuss, just good food and good company."

Ambrose explains that their market and café are deeply tied to the rhythms of the land. "The changing seasons play a big role in what we offer. As the weather starts to cool, visitors can expect to find hearty, comforting dishes on our café menu that highlight what's still coming in from the fields—think squash, greens, sweet potatoes and fall tomatoes. Our market stays stocked with local produce, homemade casseroles, and seasonal baked goods, making it easy to take a taste of the season home." @stonomarketandtomatoshedcafe

Enjoy a relaxing meal at the Stono Market and Tomato Shed Cafe.

Magical moments dining outside at Lost Isle.

PHOTO ANDRE HINDS | KODA CREATIVE

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My Charleston home is your home on the Charleston Fall Tours of Homes this October.

PHOTO PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF CHARLESTON.

Take back the dining table—

Lost Isle on John's Island

Imagine having a backyard restaurant that landed on the *New York Times* 2024 Top 50 list and was named *Southern Living's* favorite restaurant in 2025. That's Lost Isle—a walk-in-only, open-air dining experience that's somehow both nationally acclaimed and blissfully under-the-radar. Set beneath the trees with twinkling chandeliers, the restaurant's live-fire kitchen turns out wood-fired dishes using ingredients from area purveyors. The ambiance, says the team, is what keeps guests coming back. "Our staff, the lighting, the foliage, the music—it all creates a uniquely laid-back experience that resonates with guests," they explain. "The scenic backdrop and the elevated, laid-back environment is a welcomed escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life."

In the fall, as cooler weather rolls in and fires crackle and scent the air, Lost Isle feels like an enchanted hideaway. "When the sun sets and the chandeliers glow, it creates the most magical atmosphere," they say. Complimentary blankets add warmth, and the seasonal menu shifts with cozy touches—like carrots, new fall accompaniments, and cocktails infused with pumpkin and autumn produce. @lostislejohnsisland

Take back what's in your backyard—

Charleston Fall Tours of Homes

The Fall Tours presented by the Preservation Society of Charleston invite locals to rediscover the city's layered beauty at a quieter, slower pace. This month-long series (October 1-31) of House & Garden Tours, Insider's Tours, and guided Walking Tours takes participants beyond familiar streets into private homes, gardens and spaces that contribute to our city's character. Each small-group experience is thoughtfully curated to maximize the educational experience, led by expert historians, architects and passionate homeowners.

From downtown to Sullivan's Island, classical ironwork to mid-century design, each tour highlights Charleston's evolving architecture and cultural landscape. Whether you've lived here for decades or just a few years, the Fall Tours offer a rare opportunity to see Charleston through fresh eyes, gaining deeper appreciation for the history and craftsmanship that surround us every day—one room, one garden, one story at a time.

For more information go to: preservationsociety.org/fall-tours

Pitt Street Bridge offers myriad of reasons to stop and enjoy the green space as well as the surrounding beauty.

Perfect for stops and strolls with your four-legged friends.

Take back stolen moments—
Relax at Pitt Street Bridge

Take back stolen moments at the Pitt Street Bridge, where history and nature converge. Once the sole connection between Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island, this former plank-and-barrel crossing now invites quiet reflection. As you walk, you tread the same path once used by the H.L. Hunley crew in 1864, trolley passengers in the early 1900s, and generations before you.

Here, the marsh breathes around you, carrying the briny scent of pluff mud. Herons, ospreys, and egrets dip and skim the water's surface, while sandpipers, terns, and seasonal visitors like wood storks and black skimmers move across the mud in jagged movements. Oyster beds glisten at low tide, and the sun rises to your left before setting by the Ravenel Bridge, casting pastel hues across the water.

Benches line the way, a perfect pause for watching tides and stars, reading books or getting lost gazing into the horizon. This is Charleston's history, gently unfolding with every step.

PHOTOS MPEAKCOCKMEDIA; JULIA LAKE SHEALY

The Georgian-style mansion at
Hampton Plantation State Historic Site.

PHOTO SOUTHCAROLINAPARKS.COM

Take back a look at the past—

Hampton Plantation State Historic Site in McClellanviile

Step into the past at Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, where a guided tour of the Georgian-style mansion (12–2 p.m. daily, $10, advance sign-up required) offers a rare look inside one of South Carolina's most storied houses. Once home to poet laureate Archibald Rutledge, the mansion overlooks quiet remnants of rice fields once carved into the Santee Delta by enslaved Africans.

"Being off the highway and buffered by the Francis Marion National Forest, it gets quiet enough I sometimes forget that cars and planes and crowds are a thing," says Park Manager Hannah E. Marley. "You can walk around and definitely get a sense of the undisturbed forests and creeks that were originally here."

In fall and winter, 100-year camellias bloom, a welcome burst of color, while Eastern wild turkeys roam the misty mornings. On the Enslaved Settlement Trail that winds through a wooden section of the park, visitors can see rice embankments and the foundation of a slave dwelling.

"The old oak trees and remains of the rice fields and the quiet in particular make me really feel like I'm in the Lowcountry," muses Marley.

For more info and times go to: southcarolinaparks.com/hampton

Take back slowing it down—

Kayak to Sandy Island and Wacamaw in Georgetown

As the summer crowds disperse and cooler temperatures settle in, fall becomes the ideal time for locals to rediscover the Waccamaw River. "There's not as much river traffic, and it's more comfortable so you can stay out longer on the water," says Mike F. Eady, lead kayak and fishing guide for Black River Outdoors Center. "Plus the wildlife is more active as the temperatures fall. White-tailed deer, alligators, otters and other animals that usually hide in the water because of the heat, become more active. And now birders can easily spot migrating species now visible through thinning trees."

Guided eco-tours to Sandy Island launch from Murells Inlet. Kayakers glide north of the island, where few people venture aside from scientists and state workers. "It's peaceful, like stepping back in time," says Eady. "You're not just looking at nature—you're in it, soaking it in the way it was meant to be."

These immersive guided eco tours explore the Waccamaw's rich cultural past, from its days as home to the Waccamaw tribe and as a key trade route between Georgetown and inland settlements. "You can feel the history when you slow down," Eady says.

Tours run year-round. Bring your own kayak or call to rent one in advance. For more info go to: blackriveroutdoors.com ■

Slow down and soak
in nature by kayak.

PHOTOS BLACKRIVEROUTDOORS.COM

Rooted in Craft, Built for The Lowcountry

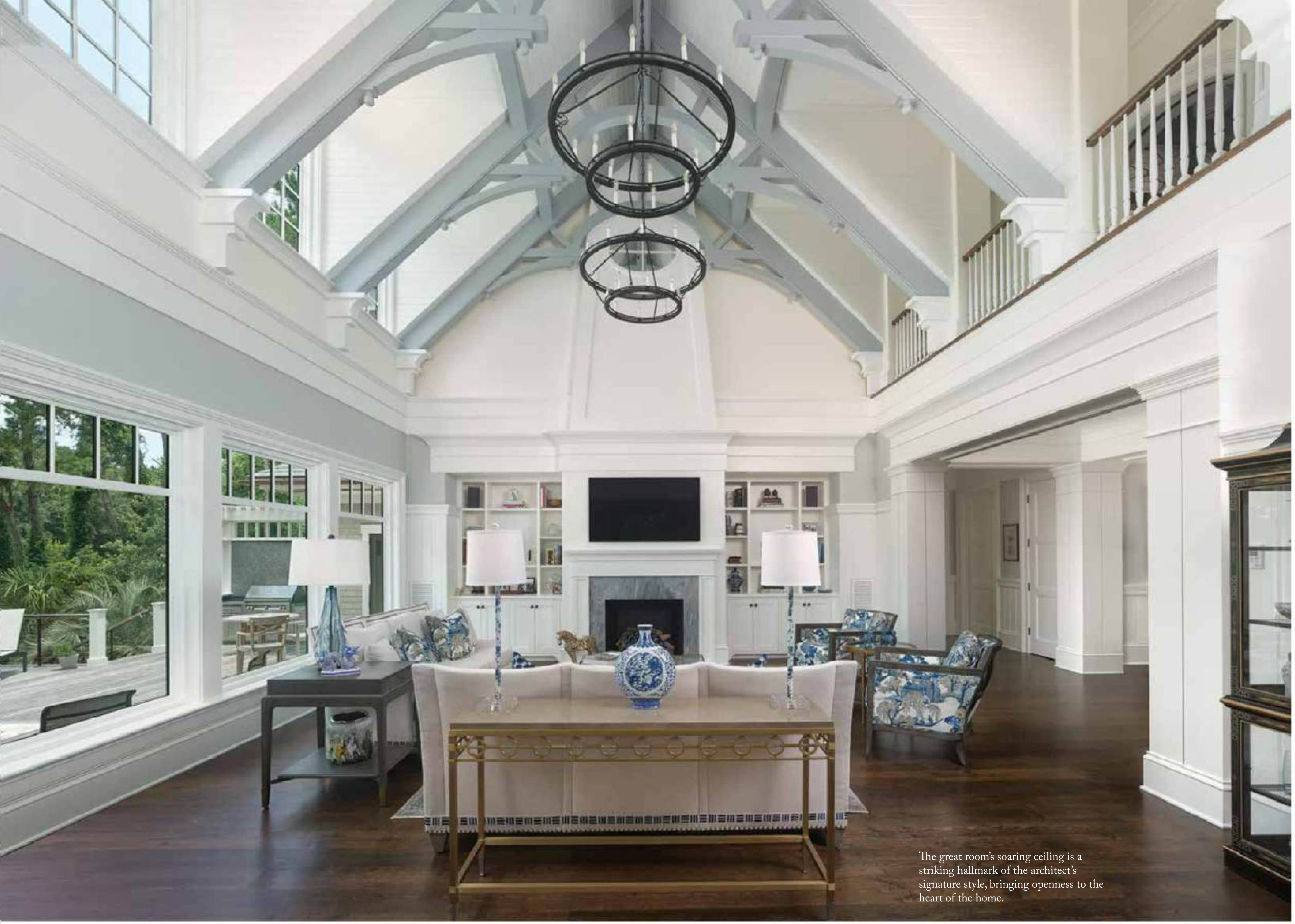
R.M. Buck Builders blends craftsmanship with proven techniques to create custom homes built to withstand the South’s climate

By **EMILY O’BRIEN**

Photos by **HOLGER OBENAUS**

Situated on Johns Island, South Carolina, where the Lowcountry’s natural beauty inspires thoughtful design and quality craftsmanship, R.M. Buck Builders has steadily built a reputation for custom homes that reflect the unique lifestyles of their owners. Bob Buck founded the company in the ‘70s, combining generational skills with modern construction methods to create homes that stand the test of time and the region’s challenging climate.

This beautiful Kiawah home, designed by Marc Camens and built by R.M. Buck Builders, showcases exceptional design and meticulous craftsmanship.



The great room's soaring ceiling is a striking hallmark of the architect's signature style, bringing openness to the heart of the home.

Roots in Craftsmanship and Family Legacy

Ryan Buck, son of Bob Buck and owner and president of R.M. Buck Builders, traces his family's origins back to the Northeast, where his grandfather worked as a horse logger in the Vermont–New Hampshire area. "That's where they used horses instead of heavy machinery to haul logs and trees out of the woods," shares Buck. As a young man, he helped his father but wasn't drawn to the work, given its physical demands. His grandfather told him that if he didn't want to work as a horse logger, he'd have to take a job with his friend, who was a local builder. He did—and eventually became both a skilled cabinetmaker and a structural framer, a rare combination of trades not often seen in the industry. His father's craftsmanship led him to create his own construction and custom cabinetry companies, building luxury homes and townhomes in ski resort areas in the Northeast before fate brought the family south.

In 1989, after Hurricane Hugo, Buck decided to visit the Charleston area to see the aftermath for himself. Although he never took on storm repair work, he found that Kiawah Island had escaped significant damage. Captivated by the natural beauty, he chose to make it his home and focus on building there, marking the beginning of R.M. Buck Builders as general contractors.

A Thoughtful Approach to Homebuilding

The company builds luxury homes that blend form, function and each client's way of life. Buck explains the collaborative process with Chief Architect Marc Camens of Camens Architectural Group. Camens begins the design process by working closely with clients, creating plans that align precisely with their needs and lifestyle. "We work with Marc early on to help clients with budget and desires," Buck shares, "essentially guiding them on budgeting throughout the design phase so that "when it's time to start building, it's ready to go."

The company's long-standing partnership with Camens—over 50 projects to date—has fostered a unique builder-architect relationship rarely seen in the industry. This synergy ensures designs are not only beautiful but also practical to construct within client budgets.

Spotlight on The Settlement Residence

A recent project that exemplifies the company's craftsmanship is a 5,500-square-foot custom home in The Settlement, a neighborhood within the River Course area of Kiawah Island. Designed to complement the homeowners' active lifestyle, the residence showcases a blend of thoughtful layout and Lowcountry elegance.

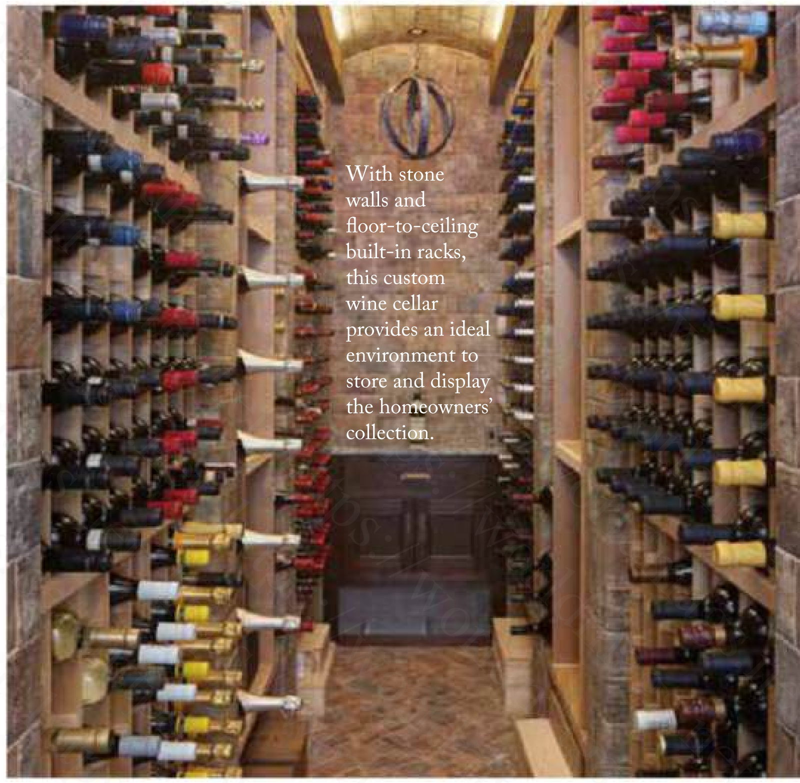
"Outdoor living has become a huge part of the Lowcountry lifestyle," Buck notes. The home includes a screened porch that functions as an outdoor living room, seamlessly blending indoor comfort with open-air living. The property also includes a spacious pool, an expansive pool deck, and a grill area designed for seamless entertaining.

Inside, the layout features two dedicated offices—one for each homeowner—reflecting the growing demand for functional and private workspaces. "That was a priority for them, to have their own workspace," adds Buck.

A standout architectural element is the vaulted great room, a signature of Camens' designs. Buck describes it as a "statement piece" with "beautiful beam work and tall ceilings." However, the grand scale posed technical challenges—particularly in figuring out how to effectively manage air conditioning within such a spacious volume. "It's always a puzzle, but it came together beautifully," he said.

The dining room, adjacent to the kitchen and screened porch, features a custom-built-in dry bar with a beverage cooler.

With a large island and effortless flow, custom cabinets from the builder's in-house shop anchor this bright white kitchen.



With stone walls and floor-to-ceiling built-in racks, this custom wine cellar provides an ideal environment to store and display the homeowners' collection.

Crafting Cabinets In-House: A Distinctive Feature

A highlight of the interior is a striking, tailor-made wine room crafted, like all the cabinetry in the home, by R.M. Buck Builders' in-house cabinet team. "One of the special aspects of our company is that we have our own custom cabinet shop," Buck explains. From wine racks to kitchen, bathroom and built-in storage, every piece was made internally, ensuring quality, consistency and a cohesive design throughout.

This approach allows for precise, project-specific customization and full control over craftsmanship. "The shop is really sized properly to handle our workload from a construction standpoint," Buck adds. Because they build exclusively for their own projects, the team can focus on specialty pieces like custom bathroom cabinets that elevate each home.

Managing the Lowcountry's Unique Building Challenges

Building in Charleston and Kiawah poses unique constraints due to the climate. Salt air, humidity and temperature fluctuations demand meticulous planning and durable construction methods. Buck emphasizes that Charleston's environment is particularly harsh, necessitating careful attention throughout the building process. To meet these demands, the company consistently partners with specialized professionals, including a mechanical engineer and a building envelope specialist, to ensure every home is constructed to endure local conditions.

These experts help guarantee homes perform well against the elements, improving longevity and comfort. "We take it to the next level, in that regard, because Mother Nature is tough, and we want to build these homes to last a very long time," says Buck. "We have a good team of people who help us engineer every home and work with us throughout the construction process to ensure that the home will perform at a very high level."

Property Management: Going Beyond Construction

R.M. Buck Builders also runs a full-service property management division, developed in response to client demand. After construction wraps up, many homeowners want ongoing weekly support while their homes are unoccupied. Today, the team provides regular inspections, maintenance and comprehensive care to keep properties in excellent condition year-round.

The service is especially valuable for second homeowners and vacation properties, which make up a large portion of their projects.

From the second level, the timber framing highlights the builder's craftsmanship while offering a glimpse outside to the inviting pool.

Buck says that even clients who live in their homes full-time don't want to deal with plumbing, electrical issues or major painting projects, and count on his team to handle it all. "They've worked with us. They trust us. So, they have us service their homes," says Buck.

Dedication to Quality

R.M. Buck Builders primarily serves homeowners on Johns Island, Kiawah, and the surrounding Lowcountry areas. Their clients range from retirees to young families relocating or investing in vacation homes. Their popularity stems from a blend of experience, attention to detail and personalized service.

Buck attributes their success to deep local knowledge and hands-on management. "We're not building cookie-cutter homes. Each project is unique, and we work closely with clients from start to finish." He adds, "Our background in cabinetry and construction gives us an edge in delivering cohesive, high-quality homes."

A Forward-Looking Builder Rooted in Tradition

Rather than take a conventional route, Buck focused on real-world experience early on. After earning a construction management degree locally, he chose to join the family business rather than take a traditional four-year college route. "I grew up in the business…. I just figured I could get right to it, and I'm glad I did."

Today, R.M. Buck Builders balances tradition with modern building science, ensuring every home stands up to the Lowcountry's unique conditions while reflecting the client's vision. The company's work, like the residence in The Settlement, is a testament to their commitment to excellence. Visit rmbuckbuilders.com ■

In calming shades of white and gray, this spa-like bathroom delivers a luxurious escape with its inviting soaking tub.

Lush landscaping and a vibrant yard frame this roomy deck.

Daniel Island custom-built, French-inspired kitchen by Terra Designs.

LUXE HOME TRENDS

From the patio to the primary suite, Charleston's experts turn spaces into a luxury experience

By DANA W. TODD

IN THE HEART OF CHARLESTON, WHERE TIMELESS CHARM MEETS MODERN ELEGANCE, A WAVE OF luxury home design is redefining the way families live. The city's top designers and home professionals are crafting spaces that go beyond aesthetics—they're building sanctuaries tailored to the people who call them home.

True luxury, after all, isn't about following trends. It's about personalization and creating a home that reflects the unique rhythms, tastes and dreams of the people who live there. While styles may shift and new materials emerge, some things remain constant in the luxury equation—fine craftsmanship, expert detailing and a commitment to customization at every turn. Whether it's custom millwork in a chef's kitchen or handmade tile in a spa-like bathroom, these elevated features bring depth and character to every room.

Charleston's design professionals understand that luxury isn't about size—it's about intention. It's the quiet elegance of a well-curated living room, the thoughtful flow between indoor and outdoor spaces, and the sense of comfort woven into every corner. As homeowners seek spaces that support both relaxation and inspiration, Charleston designers stands at the forefront, offering design solutions that marry sophistication with soul. Here, luxury is not just seen—it's felt.

Terra Designs On Infusing Joy

Blissful interiors are a necessary luxury

By DANA W. TODD

Jennifer Patterson is the owner of Terra Designs Interiors & Fine Furnishings.

An Isle of Palms beach house receives a dose of happy via hot pink swivel chairs, a navy bar, and colorful artwork.

PHOTOS HOLGER OBENAUS FOR TERRA DESIGN

A JOYFUL HOME FEELS LIKE A BIT OF LUXURY every time you step into a room. Designer Jennifer Patterson of Terra Designs explains how she achieves happy spaces.

How long have you been working in the Charleston area in the design industry, and how did you decide this was the right career for you?

I left my design firm in Washington, D.C., to return to Charleston in 2001 and opened my first design store in Mount Pleasant in 2004. Many of my first projects were new custom homes in I'On and on Daniel Island. I have always loved design since I was a child, but it wasn't my first career. I think it started with my grandmother who had a lovely historic home, and we started collecting antique reproduction dollhouse furniture from a local shop nearby. It took me several years in my first career in finance to realize I missed my childhood passion of design; it's truly what I love.

The Lowcountry is a happy place with a relaxed vibe. How do you infuse that sense of happiness into your interiors?

The idea of designing purposefully with joy is a fairly new trend which emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic. It has blossomed with all the stressors we face today. I look for simple design elements that can re-create nostalgia or foster creativity to infuse joy for my clients. I completed an historic downtown renovation and painted the original wood floors in the kitchen a cheerful green, and added a playful custom checkered painted rug under the table. For a beach home, we designed a sitting room with hot-pink performance fabric chairs with a pair of stylized flamingo paintings; it has become a favorite getaway for the family.

How do you select color to influence the feeling in a home?

I always start with "What's the purpose of this space?" The answer steers the color direction. If it's a bedroom, I personally love soft blues, greens or pinks, which evoke a sense of lightness, breeziness and calmness. I don't start with the wall color first; I select the big statement items, like the sofa, chairs, rug or art, which create layers of color to build the room. Only then do I select the wall color as the backdrop to give clients a space in which they want to linger.

Who or what influences your work?

Some of my favorite designers are Sister Parish, Dorothy Draper (and her best-known project, The Greenbriar Hotel), and Clodagh, an Irish designer who embraces sustainability, wellness and natural materials. These strong women defied conventional design of their time. Their designs inspire me to look at old items with a fresh perspective and appreciate simplicity in the details.

Patterson uncovered the original brick fireplace in an historic Downtown bedroom, converting it into a new cozy primary bathroom.

PHOTO HOLGER OBENAUS FOR TERRA DESIGN

From where do you draw inspiration for your designs?

I love classic Southern style and try to infuse that sense of timelessness in my work. Places I've traveled inspire me, like old Bermuda houses, a quaint hotel in London, and Caribbean cottages by the sea. I carry a small sketchbook to jot down interesting architectural details about old buildings, flowers and gardens. My happy place is at the beach, which is an endless source of inspiration.

How are you currently changing your retail showroom to add more joy into the products you source and sell?

Homeowners today face an overwhelming amount of design choices. I've spent the last year focused on how I can change that and am in the process of completely overhauling the showroom to bring in only things that make me happy, while giving clients a place to envision their own spaces. I painted the front room a soothing shell pink, and we've added a travel/lifestyle area of colorful wood-block tunics and woven totes. We created a new Drapery Bar—a fun space for creating mix-and-match panels, hardware and trimmings. More to come!

What is something most people don't know about you or Terra Designs?

My great grandmother's home was Lowndes Grove, an historic plantation built in 1786, which is now an event venue. My teenage son knows it as the house in the Netflix series "Outer Banks." I have a few pieces of furniture and some old linens that were passed down to me and lots of good stories. ■

For more information, go to terradesignsinteriors.com.

Charleston Outdoor Designs' Lay of the Land

A personalized landscaping design invigorates a home's outdoor living environment

By DANA W. TODD

As a native Charlestonian, Marshall Kirkman has a deep-rooted understanding of indigenous plants and Lowcountry landscaping. As founder and president of Charleston Outdoor Design, he combines his passion for the outdoors with a strong horticultural background, landscape design certification, and 15 years of industry experience to inform the design and installation of luxury-level landscaping plans for residential clients in Downtown Charleston, Mount Pleasant and the surrounding sea islands.

(Top): After a tropical storm stripped the yard bare, this lush sod installation brought instant revival; (Bottom left): Perched at the edge of a quiet coastal waterway, this sculptural deck curves like a brushstroke across the shoreline; (Right): Freshly planted palmettos lend structure to a tropical hideaway, anchored by a serene swimming pool.

PHOTOS NEWPORT653

Charleston Outdoor Design is a boutique landscaping design, build and maintenance company. Kirkman and his trusted employees handle all of their own design and installation work in-house. "Being a small company allows us to provide one-on-one attention to our clients and personalize our services," says Kirkman. "Our customer service is on-point; we pride ourselves on our fast response times and on-time service calls. We handle the details, like cleaning up the job site at the end of every day, so that our team is as unobtrusive as possible to homeowners. It's important to us that our clients feel special, so we typically work on one installation at a time until the job is complete."

Charleston Outdoor Design specializes in softscaping—planting shrubs, trees and flowers—and hardscaping—designing and installing

Verdant layers wrap the tree trunks in green at the property edges. Here, bold Tractor Seats add charm and texture.

patios, driveways, walkways, water features, outdoor fireplaces, pergolas and fire pits—as well as supplying specialty services like outdoor lighting, irrigation and drainage. The company also provides regular landscaping maintenance services to clients who request it. With a team comprised of avid gardeners and landscape designers, employees are not the typical mow-and-blow landscaping guys. They bring creative solutions to their clients via à la carte services and whole-home landscape refreshes.

Kirkman explains how the right design adds a luxe touch to the landscape. "We create sanctuaries for families and their friends, places where they can relax today and also have something for future generations," he says. "With the ability to place mature plants, homeowners' spaces are elevated and appear as if they have been in place for many years."

Kirkman ensures luxe landscapes are within reach for all types of homeowners. "When necessary, we work with clients to phase their installations over multiple seasons," Kirkman adds. "This allows homeowners to have one cohesive upscale design for their yard that is implemented over a period of time. A single design theme provides an intentional, well-thought-out look for a home, regardless of when it is installed."

Landscape designers lead clients through a discovery process to choose the right plants, natural stone and manmade materials that give the sought-after look. They specify materials that can weather the maritime environment; all finishes and fixtures are of the highest quality to ensure years of good looks and usefulness.

The company structures its process to gather extensive information about the client's vision so the team can create a bespoke plan. An initial questionnaire is followed by an on-site meeting to assess the property. "We spend a lot of time listening," Kirkman says. "We want the most input possible before we begin the design process." After creating a preliminary design, the team once again accepts client input and revises the plan as necessary. The foreman assigned to the project is a degreed professional and is happy to walk through execution plans and answer follow-up questions. If any issues arise, he works closely with the homeowner and the landscape designer to quickly find the best solution. In addition, the company proudly guarantees its work with a warranty.

The company's experts spend each day helping homeowners create welcoming curb appeal and family-friendly outdoor entertainment areas. Kirkman says, "We help our clients find the perfect Lowcountry look to complement their home's architectural style and their specific lifestyle." ■

For more information, visit charlestonoutdoordesign.com.

Strategic lighting provides sure footing at night on a walking path.

PHOTOS NEWPORT653

Above the Cityscape with Southern Land Company

Historic charm meets refined luxury at apartment community Society at Laurens in Downtown Charleston

By DANA W. TODD

Jenna Lefever, Vice President of Public Relations, Southern Land Company.

Natural daylight floods the Society at Laurens apartments; 25 residences are harbor-facing and 25 more have water views.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOUTHERN LAND COMPANY

CHARLESTON LIVING HAD THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE a new upscale apartment community, Society at Laurens, located in the heart of Downtown and created by Southern Land Company (SLC). Vice President of Public Relations Jenna Lefever, explains how SLC incorporates luxurious features and amenities into its properties, particularly in Society at Laurens.

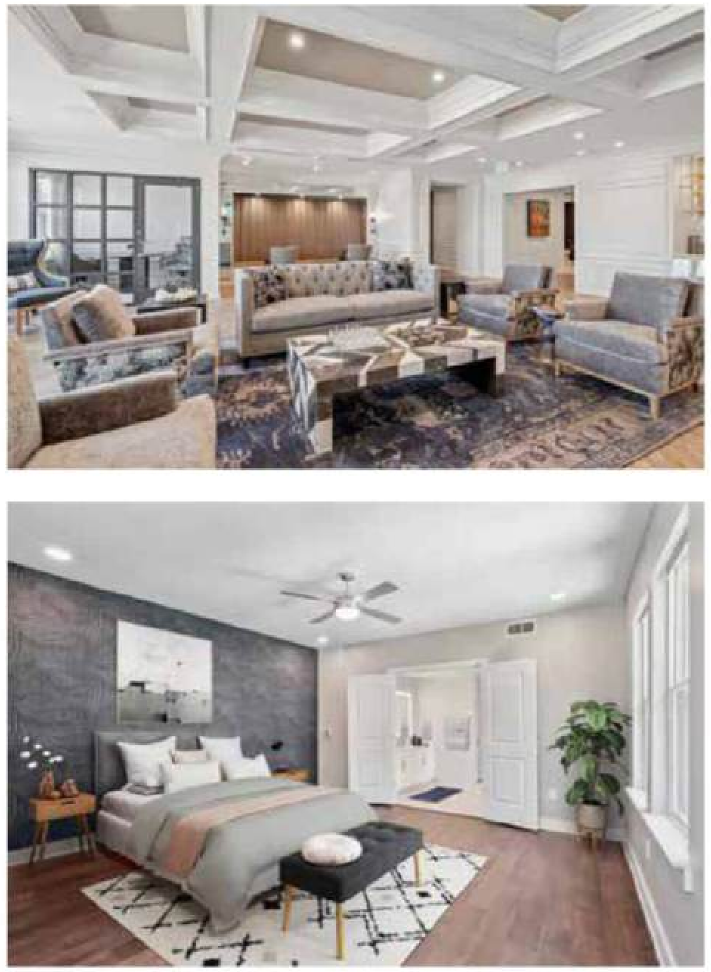
Overall, what characterizes SLC projects as luxury?

SLC communities embody luxury through architectural artistry and originality, thoughtful interior design, carefully curated amenity collections, intentional horticulture programs and a focus on hospitality. We achieve this through a vertically integrated structure—with all disciplines in-house, from development and design to horticulture and property management—and combine them with a stringent set of high standards.

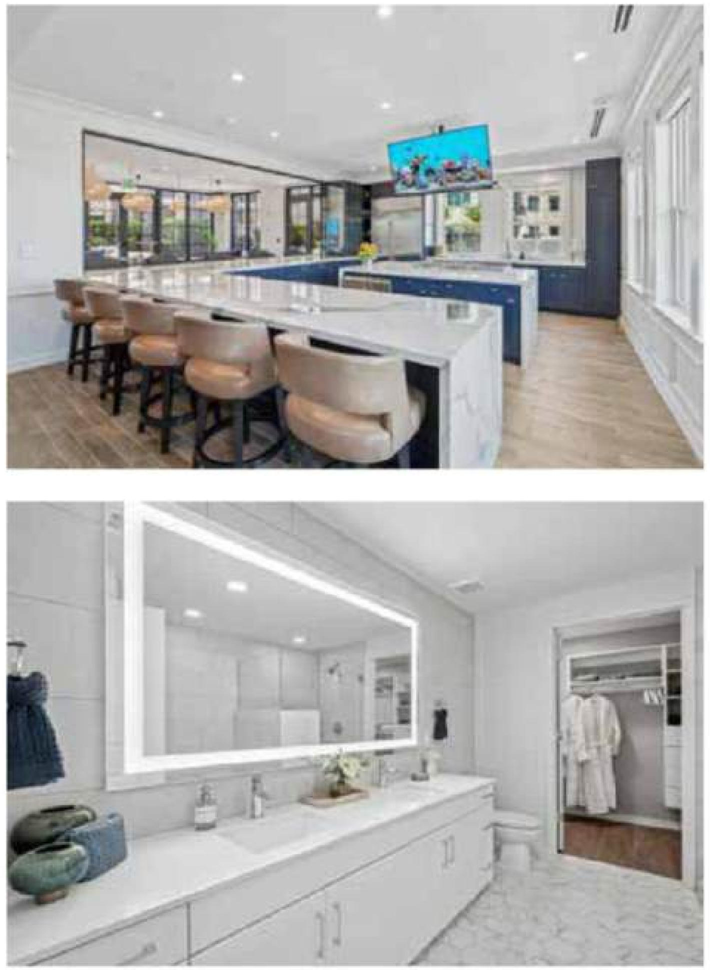
Our communities are designed to be completely unique and independent from one another. Our in-house architecture and design team does not replicate communities; each is designed to both reflect and complement its surrounding locale, from the buildings' facades down to the smallest interior details.

Just as luxury resorts are known for meticulous attention to their outdoor landscapes, so are SLC communities. We believe landscaping is an extension of the architecture and design of each community we build. Our in-house horticulture team collaborates with local experts to create spaces that are beautiful, sustainable and harmonious with the location's natural environment.

A luxury community must include a strong focus on hospitality and an exceptional resident experience. Our community management professionals are thoroughly trained to provide world-class, personalized resident services and to curate creative, engaging events and programming intended to foster community among residents. Greeting each resident by name, having treats ready for daily dog visits, providing concierge services, and planning weekly social events —along with surprise-and-delight moments—are just a few of the ways we strive to extend our own brand of Southern hospitality to our residents.



(Top): Residences feature open-concept living spaces; (Bottom) Focal wallcoverings in a Society at Laurens bedroom adds a pop of interest.



(Top): The demonstration kitchen inside The Blue Palm is open to all residents; (Bottom): Quartz countertops in baths and kitchens provide an elevated experience.

What makes Society at Laurens a luxury apartment community?

Society at Laurens' luxury status begins with its highly desirable location in the heart of historic Charleston. Surrounded by beauty and boasting picturesque water views, Society at Laurens is a refined haven, yet highly walkable to some of Charleston's most renowned restaurants, shopping, museums and parks.

Every detail is carefully chosen to reflect the city's rich character, including masonry and cast stone exteriors, graceful columns echoing classical Southern design, warmly glowing gas lanterns and private balconies.

Society at Laurens' 148 residences feature open-concept living spaces, chef-inspired kitchens with GE appliances, abundant windows for ample natural light, and custom walk-in closets. Designer features and finishes include pendant lighting, quartz countertops, matte bath flooring and under-cabinet lighting.

The interiors throughout the three residential buildings evoke the timeless charm of Charleston while being designed for modern living. They have a sense of gracious Southern hospitality apparent from the first step inside the apartment. Residents can expect light-filled spaces, refined finishes, coastal-inspired palettes and serene colors. Carefully-curated artwork adorns the corridors of the three residential buildings, creating unexpected spaces of interest and elevating the everyday experience by reinforcing a strong sense of place. Each level features pieces that reflect the textures and tones of Charleston, including original paintings by local artists.

What amenities ensure residents at Society at Laurens experience an elevated lifestyle?

The community's white-glove amenities and services help make this location a sanctuary of rest and relaxation, much like a luxury resort. Our amenity collection features: a heated saltwater pool, complete with spa and views of Charleston Harbor, situated on a second-level deck; outdoor social gathering space with a fireplace; a state-of-the-art fitness center; The Blue Palm—a meeting place for residents perfect for gathering with friends or working from home, which is equipped with a full kitchen and bar; a Wi-Fi-enabled boardroom; and a private dog run and pet spa.

Residents can reserve any of Society at Laurens' communal lounges for personal occasions, while also enjoying opportunities to connect with neighbors through a variety of social and wellness programs organized by the community's property management and hospitality experts. Recent programming has included a summer jazz concert series, a bourbon tasting event and a pasta-making class. ■

Society at Laurens is located at 31 Laurens Street in Charleston. Learn more at societyatlaurens.com and @societycharleston.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOUTHERN LAND COMPANY

Food

DINING OUT | LIBATIONS | IN THE KITCHEN | HOSPITALITY

Big Dish Energy

Gather and graze on these fall flavors.

»

See page 96

Fall hummus with lemon & beets.
See recipe pg. 100

PHOTO FANNY SLATER

By WENDY SWAT SNYDER

Joie de Vivre!

The Select brings the best of French living to King Street

IT'S A LITTLE PIECE OF PARIS in the heart of the Lowcountry. With echoes of the iconic French brasserie, Le Select, felt throughout the property, the Charleston iteration draws inspiration from its free-spirited style—a place where, in 1920s Europe, artists and literary figures such as Picasso, Hemmingway and Fitzgerald met for lively conversation and honest food.

Here, The Select concept deftly blends bistro classics with New American cuisine in a chic setting that evokes the Belle Époque of France.

A sister restaurant of The Select Atlanta, the inspiration for both properties came from Sandy Springs Hospitality Managing Member, David Green. "I had traveled around Europe for several months," he says. "I loved eating there—the experience was noticeably different to me. The food is hyper local. There are no preservatives or pasteurization. It makes you feel great. When I returned to States, I said we should figure out a way to do this here."

With a shared vision for the kitchen, the hospitality group built a back-of-house team for the Atlanta restaurant that included Executive Chef Remi Granger, a native of France, and Culinary Director Julian Parker, from Columbia. Soon after The Select opened in Charleston in 2024, Executive Chef Michael Semancik joined the team.

"Remi taught us about making things fresh, like the stock for our onion soup," says Green. "He and Julian worked together to bring the European influence into the kitchen. We figured out how to make delicious bread like a Parisian bakery—that's healthy to eat. All our decisions are made around fresh, flavorful, real food—that's part of our culture."

Semancik shares the values and philosophy of Green and the culinary team, which include adhering to the golden rule when choosing staff for the dining room.

"We try to go out of our way to make people feel comforted and special," says Semancik. The Maine native brings several years of hospitality experience running food and beverage departments at four- and five-star properties in Savannah and Atlanta, Georgia. In Charleston, he led the kitchen at The Dewberry Hotel as executive chef.

Semancik says collaboration between the properties is intensive. "We're always working to redefine dishes, with an eye toward seasonality, of course," he notes. "We aim to craft a menu in a way that's interesting and always evolving, and very conscious of what the guest would like to see. Our menu reads very similar to a brasserie—we have French onion soup and steak frites—with touches of Modern American cuisine, so we're not pigeon-holed into strictly one style. For instance, our salmon has a chili glaze that borrows from another culture."

The evening my guest and I visited The Select, we were warmly greeted and felt comforted, indeed, by both a welcoming staff and ambiance. Bistro globe chandeliers bathed the dining areas in subdued light, illuminating a tiled open kitchen, expansive bar, and floor to ceiling wine cabinet. Across the expansive space is a second bar room with live music and dancing on given nights. Bent wood style chairs and banquettes provided cozy seating. Interior design, custom furnishings and installation were provided by Ann Design & Immersive Interiors of Atlanta.

Our attentive and knowledgeable server ushered us through the menu with ease, and wisely got us started with a warmed French baguette. The loaf's outstanding flavor comes from the natural fermentation of a "mother dough" starter brought from Atlanta by Parker.

Next out, a classic Italian arancini (fried rice balls), featuring wild Maine lobster spiced with a hint of Basque Espelette pepper powder finished with a tasty 'nduja aioli.

A crock of French onion soup, oozing with melted gruyere cheese, made its entrance next. The rich veal stock, made with a splash of sherry, is the recipe Granger beat Food Network's Bobby Flay with.

We were treated to South American flavors native to Parker's heritage with a ceviche of Chilean sea bass. Layers of flavor came from leche de tigre, a coconut milk-based marinade with just right touches of lime and chili. The nutty taste of taro root chips for scooping was spot on.

A savory/sweet Italian burrata salad showcased seasonal peaches, local heirloom tomatoes and focaccia croutons, brightened with a balsamic reduction and finished with a touch of peppery tajin and basil oil.

Our two mains were said to be top sellers. We know why: A perfectly cooked piece of salmon was made more amazing with a sweet, spicy Asian style glaze and cradled in a beurre blanc. Confit fingerling potatoes, haricot verts, and maitakes finished the lovely presentation.

Next, a boneless short rib that was braised slowly till fork tender—what Semancik calls "a half-day dish; a labor of love." Creamy mashed potatoes offset the richness of the meat and bourguignon jus. Perfectly al dente vegetables like roasted carrots were sautéed with bacon.

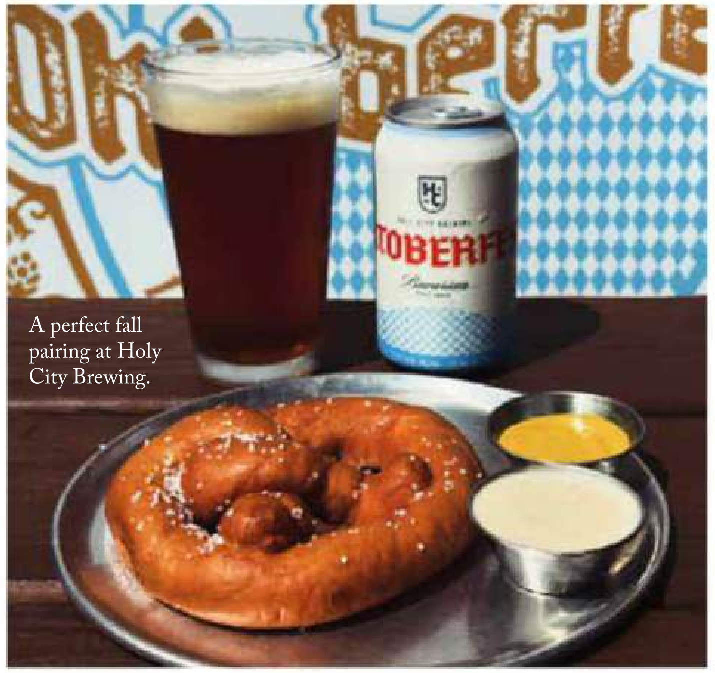
Sticky toffee—a British classic—featured not overly sweet date cake drizzled with a warm toffee sauce, a sprinkling of candied pecans and topped with a dollop of cool vanilla gelato. The moistness of the tender cake was preserved by a Combi oven, an investment by the kitchen that makes all the difference to the restaurant's baked goods.

French bistro flair, an authentic menu with an element of surprise, and a calendar of events and live music combine to make The Select a go-to for both locals and anyone venturing into this upper King Street community. Eating healthy like a European—gravy!

(Opposite): The Select's dining room features floor to ceiling wine cabinets. (Right: Don't forget the sticky toffee!) (Below): Loster Arancini, Peach Burrata and Hot Blue Crab Dip all delight.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SELECT

The Select Charleston
465 Meeting Street
Charleston, SC
843-278-5025
theselectcharleston.com



A perfect fall pairing at Holy City Brewing.

Enjoy seasonal favorite Pecan Dream this fall.

Beyond Beer

Community on Tap at Holy City Brewing

By SARAH ROSE

For locals in the know, Holy City Brewing (HCB), is not just a destination for sampling beer—it's a community. Located on the edge of Noisette Creek in Park Circle, the brewery invites guests to enjoy a cold one in the Taproom, a full-service brewery-to-table experience. With a menu featuring a variety of burgers, wings, salads, sandwiches and starters, alongside an extensive selection of beer, wine and hand-crafted cocktails, choosing what to order can be tough.

Co-owner and Production Manager Chris Brown recommends a delicious fall pairing: the traditional pretzel served with the brewery's signature Oktoberfest beer. Another seasonal crowd favorite is the Pecan Dream, a brown ale brewed with pecans. Both beers are available on draft and in cans in stores around Charleston, South Carolina.

Additional food options abound with The Walrus at Holy City, the brewery's in-house raw bar, which serves seafood from both near and far—oysters on the half-shell, ceviche, peel-and-eat shrimp, clams, smoked fish dip and marinated yellowfin tuna. The menu and wine list rotate regularly.

The Taproom also houses several private event venues, including The Mezzanine, The Aqua Lounge, The Porter Room and The Courtyard.

For added convenience, visitors can enjoy the Cabana Bar—an oasis in the creek side yard. With access to twelve beers on tap, HCB beers in cans, basic cocktails, and food from the Taproom and raw bar, customers never have to leave the sunshine to order another round. Kids of all ages can also enjoy a treat from Sweet Adeline's Ice Cream Bar.

"By creating these indoor and outdoor spaces, we encourage everyone to enjoy the property and stay awhile—not just pop by for beer and a burger," Brown says.

All year round, the brewery offers something for everyone. "During the holidays, there's the Christmas village, and in the spring, we offer laser tag. On the dock, we allow fishing and crabbing, and we're excited to team up with Tia Clark, a local expert who will teach crabbing classes. The fresh catch can be prepared onsite at our raw bar."

Brown adds that a fall favorite is the Southern Screams Haunted House. Boasting 4,000 square feet of winding hallways and rooms, the attraction is an intense experience that is recommended for those who can handle a good scare. Minors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must sign a waiver; children under 13 are not suggested. The haunted house runs from September 26 through November 8. To view available dates and times and reserve tickets, visit southernscreams.com.

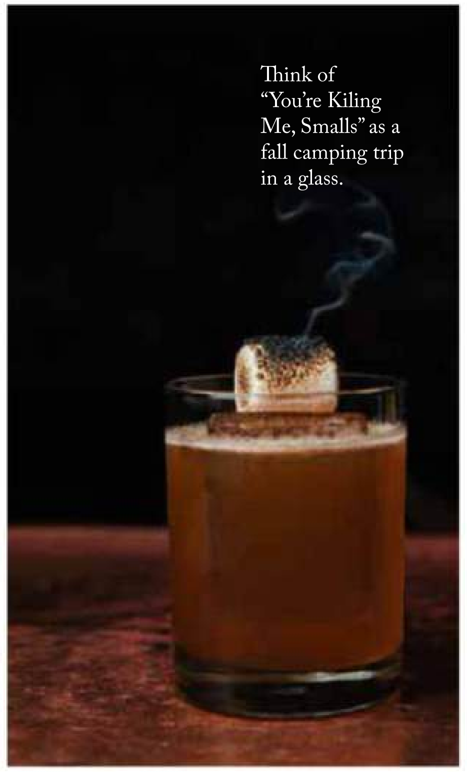
In 2024, more than 10,000 visitors experienced the haunted house, where 30 actors in full makeup put on a terrifying show. "We go all out for the haunted house," Brown laughs. "To celebrate this year's vampire theme, we're collaborating with Don Luchi—the only importer of Italian prosecco on the East Coast—to create an elegant sparkling pale ale. We expect it will sell out by the end of October."

To explore everything the brewery has to offer and check out upcoming events, visit holycitybrewing.com. Or pack an appetite and head to 1021 Aragon Avenue in North Charleston. ■

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HOLY CITY BREWING

"Harvest Moon" was inspired by Thanksgiving dishes.

"Long Distance Winner" blends the first root vegetables of the fall with the last of summer flavors.



Think of "You're Kiling Me, Smalls" as a fall camping trip in a glass.

Drink Proper

Whimsical cocktail menu at The Gin Joint changes with the seasons

By SARAH ROSE

Although Federal Prohibition hovered over Charleston from 1920-1933, the ban on alcohol had little effect on the local Roaring '20s party scene. Spirits such as gin, whiskey and rum were still readily available, even if sold and purchased illegally. While still as popular today as they ever were, these and other liquors are crafted into unique concoctions at the Gin Joint, located downtown at 182 East Bay Street.

Owner Wells Bolt says she and her husband James—who attended the Culinary Institute of America in New York, and previously bartended at the Gin Joint before the couple took over the speakeasy in 2017—change their cocktail menu every season.

"We challenge our bar team to find new, rather than traditional flavors, that are sourced locally as well as seasonally," Wells explains. "To invoke an element of surprise and adventure, we approach our innovative cocktail program with a sense of creativity and whimsy. By pairing ingredients that evoke memory and senses, and that are sometimes hard to wrap your head around, we spark an element of surprise and adventure for our patrons who are excited to try something they weren't expecting. Ultimately, it's about what we're putting in a glass that's going to make our guests the happiest."

Some examples of Gin Joint alchemy include "Harvest Moon," which is made with acorn squash, gin, sorghum, caraway and fennel, and is inspired by Thanksgiving dishes, and "You're Killing Me, Smalls" which is a fall camping trip in a glass made from Tom Cat gin, rum, a burnt marshmellow and white peppercorn. Another intriguing option is to ask for the bartender's choice, which involves picking any combination of two of the following words: refreshing, tart, savory, fruit, boozy, spicy, sweet, licorice, herbal, bitter, unusual, floral, smoky, fizzy or vegetal.

While its name suggests that the bulk of its cocktails are made with gin, the Gin Joint has the largest whiskey collection in the city, according to Wells. There is no shortage of any other high-end liquor imaginable, either.

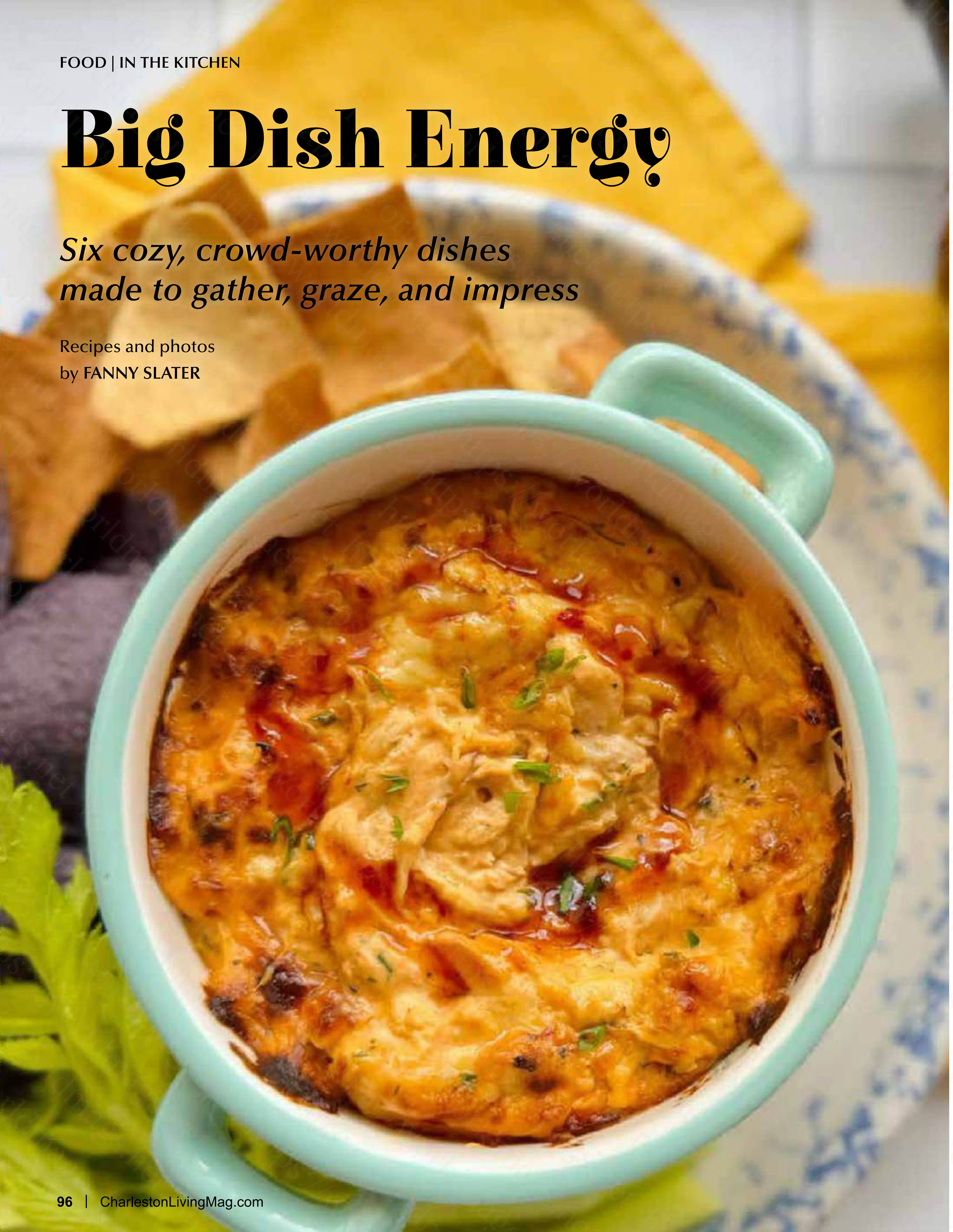
"We are as intentional with our brands as we are with our ingredients," Wells says. "Our philosophy is familiarity and keeping true to who we are. That's what keeps locals and tourists coming back year after year."

She adds, "Our hearts really go into what we're doing. In a lot of ways, this is our home, a place to break bread and share a drink with friends."

To learn about the options that are currently available, visit theginjoint.com and follow them on Instagram @gin_joint. ■

Owners Wells and James Bolt stand by The Gin Joint cocktail process.

PHOTOS ANDREW CEBULKA



Big Dish Energy

Six cozy, crowd-worthy dishes made to gather, graze, and impress

Recipes and photos
by FANNY SLATER

WE MADE IT TO LOCALS' SEASON! THE "WHERE IS 'OUTER BANKS' BEING FILMED?" CROWD HAS FLED, the water's still warm enough for a dip, and we're all pretending sweater weather is just around the corner. (Spoiler alert: it's not). But just because we're not reaching for scarves and hot cider doesn't mean we're not lighting pumpkin candles and testing last season's jeans for stretch. Even under the spell of Charleston's eternal summer, "Practical Magic" is now officially on repeat, and bold, comforting flavors are very much part of the game plan. This lineup is perfect for gathering your people, grazing freely, and soaking up every compliment like the main character you are. Expect little sparks of kitchen magic—a beet hummus so bright it could make Barbie blush, "homemade" pumpkin ravioli that leans hard on wonton wrappers, and an Asian-fusion chicken dip begging for game day glory. To top it off, sneaky protein-packed blondies hiding chickpeas as their secret weapon, adding fiber while keeping every bite soft and fudgy. Don't worry—we won't spill the beans to the kids if you don't.

Sweet & Spicy Asian Chicken Dip

Yield: About 3 cups

Ingredients:

1 (8-ounce) block cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup ranch dressing
1/4 cup Bachan's Japanese BBQ Sauce, plus more for drizzling
1 1/2 tablespoons hot sauce (such as Frank's RedHot)
4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, freshly grated
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
Optional garnishes: chopped scallions, cilantro, sesame seeds
Tortilla chips, crackers, and fresh veggies, for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the cream cheese, ranch, BBQ sauce, hot sauce, half the cheddar, and a generous pinch of salt and pepper until smooth.
3. Fold in the shredded chicken and mix until evenly combined. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper, if needed.
4. Spread the mixture into an 8-inch round (or similar-size) baking dish. Top with the remaining cheddar.
5. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until hot, bubbly, and golden on top.
6. Drizzle with additional BBQ sauce and finish with your choice of garnishes. Serve warm with chips, crackers, and fresh veggies.

Pumpkin Ravioli with Cream Sauce + Toasted Walnuts

Yield: 4–6 servings

Ingredients:

Filling
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 small shallot, minced
1/2 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree
1/4 cup whole milk ricotta
2 tablespoons grated Parmigiano Reggiano
1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Pinch ground nutmeg
About 50 wonton wrappers
1 large egg + 2 tablespoons water, lightly beaten (for egg wash)

Cream Sauce
2 cups heavy cream
2 cloves garlic, smashed
1/4 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
Salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
Optional garnish: Fresh sage leaves, olive oil, grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Directions:

1. In a small skillet, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the minced shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and golden, about 8–10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool.
3. In a large bowl, combine the pumpkin puree, ricotta, Parmesan, caramelized shallots, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Season to taste.
4. Lay half the wonton wrappers on a clean surface. Place about 1 teaspoon of filling in the center of each wrapper—making sure not to overfill. Brush the edges with egg wash, top with another wrapper, and press edges firmly to seal. Use a fork to crimp the edges and set ravioli aside on damp towels to prevent sticking.
5. In a saucepan, warm the heavy cream and smashed garlic over medium heat. Simmer gently for 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened Using a slotted spoon, remove the garlic cloves. Whisk in the Parmesan until melted and smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the ravioli in batches for 2–3 minutes, until they float to the surface and are tender. Remove with a slotted spoon, reserving some pasta water for thinning the cream sauce if necessary.
7. Divide the ravioli and sauce among plates, garnish with the toasted walnuts, Parmesan and sage, then drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil.

Garlicky Baked Pork Chops with Sage Butter

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 large cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons chopped fresh sage, divided
4 bone-in pork chops (preferably rib chops), about 1-inch thick
2 teaspoons coarse salt
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons neutral oil (such as vegetable)
2 tablespoons dry white wine
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400˚F.
2. In a small bowl, mix the butter, garlic and 2 tablespoons of sage and season with a pinch of salt.
3. Dry the pork chops with paper towels, then season on both sides with the salt and pepper. In an oven-proof pan like a cast-iron, heat the oil over medium-high heat.
4. Sear the pork chops until golden brown and caramelized, about 1-2 minutes per side. Evenly scoop the sage-garlic-butter over the pork chops and pour in the white wine.
5. Place the entire pan in the oven and cook until the pork reaches an internal temperature of 145˚F, about 8-10 minutes. Spoon the pan juices over the chops while they're resting.
6. Divide the pork chops among plates, pour the remaining pan juices over them before serving, and garnish with the remaining sage and parsley.

French Onion Soup Casserole with Sherry

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 large Vidalia onions, thinly sliced
2 large cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons coarse salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 dried bay leaves
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, divided
1 tablespoon tomato paste
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 cup dry cooking sherry
1/4 cup dry red wine
6 cups reduced-sodium beef broth
1 demi-baguette (about 10-12 inches long), sliced into 1/2-inch-thick rounds
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups shredded Gruyère cheese (or sharp provolone)

Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a large, wide pot over medium-low heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions soften and release juices, about 20 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon of the salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, bay leaves and 1 tablespoon of thyme. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the onions are caramelized and golden, about 40 minutes more.
2. While the onions cook, preheat oven to 350˚F.
3. Arrange the baguette slices on a baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil, and bake, flipping halfway, until golden and toasted, about 10–12 minutes.
4. Discard the bay leaves and stir in the tomato paste and flour, cooking over medium heat for 2 minutes.
5. Deglaze the pot with the sherry, wine, and beef broth, scraping up browned bits. Bring the soup to a boil and cook until slightly thickened, 2–3 minutes. Add the remaining salt and pepper.
6. In a 9x13-inch baking dish, layer half the toasted bread and half the soup. Top with remaining bread and cheese. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes.
7. Remove the foil and broil the casserole until the cheese is bubbly and golden. Sprinkle with the remaining thyme and serve.

Fall Hummus with Lemon & Beets

Yield: About 2 cups

Ingredients

2 small red beets, scrubbed (greens reserved for garnish)
3 sprigs fresh rosemary
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
Coarse salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
1 large clove garlic, minced
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon lemon zest (some reserved for garnish)
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons tahini
1 teaspoon honey
Sesame seeds, for garnish
Fresh vegetables and warm pita bread, for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Toss the beets and rosemary with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, salt and pepper. Wrap tightly in foil and roast until tender, about 40 minutes. Cool, peel and roughly chop the beets.
3. Remove the chickpea skins by rubbing them between your fingers.
4. In a food processor, combine the beets, chickpeas, garlic, coriander, cumin, lemon zest and juice, tahini and honey. Blend until mostly smooth. With the machine running, drizzle in 1 tablespoon olive oil and add a few ice cubes to whip it until silky and light. Add tahini oil if needed to loosen.
5. Season to taste with salt and chill until cool. Serve topped with beet greens, sesame seeds, reserved lemon zest and remaining olive oil. Enjoy with fresh veggies and warm pita.

Protein-Packed Cobweb Blondies

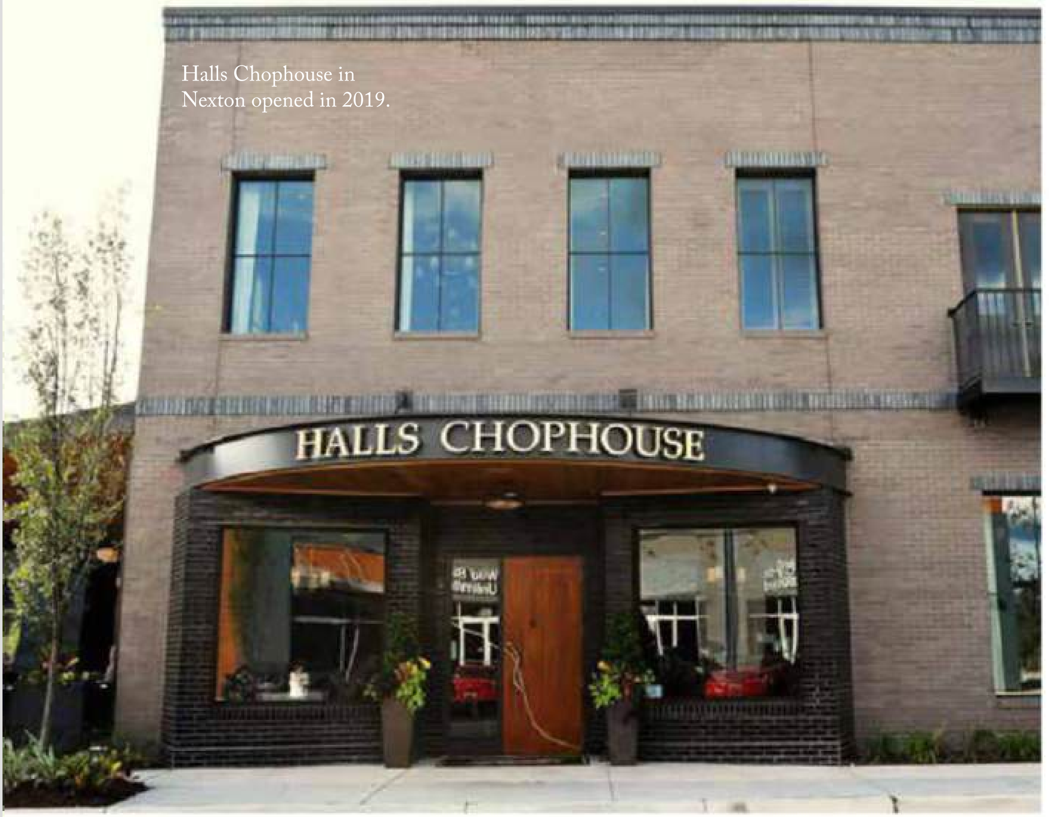
Yield: 9 brownies

Ingredients

1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
1/2 cup maple syrup
1/4 cup mashed banana
1/4 almond butter
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, divided
1 cup marshmallows

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and spray an 8x8-inch metal pan with non-stick spray.
2. In a food processor, blend the chickpeas, maple syrup, banana, almond butter and vanilla until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, brown sugar and flour.
4. Fold the dry mix into the wet in three additions, then fold in 3/4 cup chocolate chips. Pour the batter into the pan, sprinkle with remaining chips, and bake until set but slightly soft, about 20-25 minutes.
5. Cool completely and then slice into squares or rectangles.
6. Microwave the marshmallows in a microwave-safe bowl for 30 seconds until gooey. Stir until smooth, then stretch with two forks into thin strands and drape over blondies to create a cobweb pattern.
7. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for 3-5 days.



Halls Chophouse in Nexton opened in 2019.

Tommy Hall is the president and CEO of Halls Management Group.

PHOTOS HALLS MANAGEMENT GROUP

Hospitality in Full Color

How Halls Chophouse brought its signature style to Nexton

By PAMELA JOUAN

At Halls Chophouse, hospitality isn't a tagline—it's a way of life. And in Nexton, that philosophy resonates. Since opening in 2019, Halls has not only drawn in Summerville's business crowd and neighborhood regulars, but also set the bar for the wave of restaurants now eager to join the area.

Full credit for the location, Halls Management Group President and CEO Tommy Hall says, goes to his father, Bill Hall Sr. "He always said there was nowhere else to go on the coast—everything was going up the corridor on 26. When we first looked at Summerville and Nexton, it was woods. I didn't see it at the time, but he was adamant. Six years later, we look back and are blown away by the success."

Today, walking into Halls Nexton can feel a lot like walking into the Charleston flagship. "It's almost an exact replica," Hall says. "So many of our downtown guests now live or work in the area. I see familiar faces all the time." It's like an extension of downtown, but with its own heartbeat.

That heartbeat is sustained by a staff culture built on more than just fine dining skills. "Every manager, chef, and sous chef starts at the mothership downtown," Hall explains. "We hire for great attitude and energy in hospitality. I can teach you about steaks and wine, but I can't teach you how to make people have a great day." Many of Halls' servers started as assistants, food runners or hostesses and worked their way up—a testament to the work culture they have created.

At Halls, service is "black and white," Hall says, but hospitality is "in color." That means reading the table: knowing when a guest wants a handshake and a hug, or when they just want a quiet meal. "It's about making them feel like they're in our home."

Sometimes that means going the extra mile—literally. Hall recalls a family coming to Halls Nexton with their young daughter who wanted an ice cream cone from a shop across the street. "We serve ice cream in-house—but our server walked right over, bought her one, and brought it back. The family wrote me a letter. Now that's my definition of hospitality."

As much as Halls wants you to feel like you are part of their family, they are happy to serve yours, in your own home, too. As Thanksgiving looms, Halls Nexton offers turkey dinners to go (order early) and even private chef experiences, a trend Hall sees as growing. "We bring the food and the pots and pans, we'll use your kitchen, and clean up on the way out." It's their way of acknowledging that getting out the door with a full household isn't always easy—and of taking that worry off your plate.

For Halls, the recipe for success is simple: serve world-class food, hire people with heart, and always deliver hospitality in full color. ■

Restaurant Guide

Hot blue crab dip at The Select.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SELECT

Here's The Dish!

From fine dining to local favorites in Charleston.

American

Basic Kitchen (D) 82 Wentworth St, 789-4568. Located in the heart of downtown Charleston, Basic Kitchen is housed in a historic building with floor to ceiling windows and a covered courtyard filled with plants and herbs used by the kitchen. Open for brunch and dinner, guests can enjoy a rotating daily menu featuring simple, seasonal and delightful dishes.

Husk (D) 76 Queen St. 577-2500. An ever-changing menu of locally-sourced Southern dishes play to what local purveyors have seasonally available at any given moment. Situated in a restored Victorian-era home, Husk is a memorable Charleston location. Open for lunch Mon-Sat from 11:30 am – 2:30 pm and dinner daily at 5:30 pm with brunch on Sunday from 10 am – 2:30 pm.

Little Jack's Tavern (D) 710 King St, 531-6868. Little Jack's has all the fanfare of an old-school, all-American tavern, yet without the age. A go-to for steaks, shrimp cocktails, cold beers, burgers, and a dose of nostalgia, it's a timeless neighborhood spot.

Locations: (D) Downtown; (DI) Daniel Island; (FB) Folly Beach; (IOP) Isle of Palms; (J) John's Island; (JI) James Island; (KS) Kiawah/Seabrook; (MP) Mount Pleasant; (NC) North Charleston; (S) Summerville; (SI) Sullivan's Island; (WA) West Ashley

Area restaurants provide this information to Charleston LIVING magazine. It is published according to space availability. No advertising or other considerations are accepted in exchange for a listing. To participate in our restaurant guide, call 843-856-2532.

Lowland Tavern (D) 36 George St., Charleston. A Southern tavern spanning two floors of the historic Lequeux-Williams home in the heart of downtown Charleston serving timeless classics and luxurious comfort such as pasta, steak and burgers.

Obstinate Daughter (SI) Pizza, pasta, small plates and a raw bar are the focus of the menu. Changing seasonally, the creative menu—think redfish with farro, kale pesto and boiled peanuts—is rooted by the burgeoning farms and fishermen in the Lowcountry who supply superior products to the restaurant.

R Kitchen (D) 212 Rutledge Ave.; (WA) 1337 Ashley River Rd., 789-4342. Reservations-only intimate atmosphere with seats for up to 16 guests in the kitchen or 20 including the covered patio. Five courses for $70 with wine and beer options available for purchase. Menus change daily, from filet to red snapper. Downtown location reservations at 6 pm and 8 pm Tuesday-Sunday. West Ashley location reservations Tuesday-Saturday at 6 pm and 8 pm.

Sorghum & Salt (D) 186 St. Philip St, 872-6393. Farm to Table focused small plates. Utilizing the bounty of the surrounding farms, seas, and fauna. As said by Resy's Charleston food blogger Vanessa Wolf "[Sorghum & Salt is now on Charleston's Hit List] Because the culinary innovations offered here are nothing short of magic."

Vern's (D) 41 Bogard St, 509-4104. There's plenty to love within the imaginative seasonal American menu at this handsome neighborhood restaurant from Dano and Bethany Heinze, veterans of Charleston's acclaimed McCrady's and L.A. hot spots Animal and Jon & Vinny's. Remember to check the blackboard menu over the antiqued mantelpiece for daily specials.

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Asian

Basil (MP) 1465 Long Grove Rd. 606-9642. Traditional Thai entrees using the freshest ingredients in a chic and relaxed setting. Lunch, Mon-Fri. Dinner nightly.

O-Ku (D) 463 King St. 737-0112. Bold and stylish décor set the tone for this upscale sushi and Japanese eatery. Menu selections include Chilean sea bass and yellowtail carpaccio. Dinner nightly.

Xiao Bao Biscuit (D) 224 Rutledge Ave. Creative, multicultural Asian cooking and specialty cocktails in a trendy converted gas station. Select lunch and dinner dishes from China, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam prepared locally and inspired by tradition. The menu changes seasonally, with rotating daily specials and family style dinner service.

Bakery

Christophe Artisan Chocolatier (D) 90 Society St., 297-8674, (WA) 1901 Ashely River Rd., 225-9133. Unique combination of French pastries, chocolate sculptures and hand-painted chocolate pieces.

Kaminskys (D) 78 N Market St., 843- 853-8270. Charming cafe serving a selection of rotating house-made desserts and cake slices with milkshakes, boozy mikshakes and specialty coffees. Open until 11 p.m. weeknights and 1 a.m. on the weekends.

Carmella's Café and Dessert Bar (D) 198 E. Bay St., 722-5893. A rotating case of delectable cakes and pies available by the slice plus dessert cocktails, gelato, sorbetto and wine bar.

Wildflour Pastry (WA) 1750 Savannah Highway 327-2621. Providing Charleston with her famous double chocolate cookies, sweet & savory scones, and legendary "Sticky Bun Sunday," Lauren Mitterer at WildFlour Pastry quickly became a favorite of the King Street neighborhood locals and those seeking an extraordinary dessert or specialty cake for their special occasions.

BBQ

Home Team BBQ (D) 126 Williman St. (WA) 1205 Ashley River Rd. (SI) 2209 Middle St. Extensive BBQ list including three-meat platters and BBQ nachos in a hip, family-friendly atmosphere. Award-winning dry rubbed wings are not to be missed. A number of housemade BBQ sauces are available on the table to douse meat as you please.

King BBQ (NC) 1505 King St Ext, 952-9993. King BBQ is a Chinatown BBQ restaurant located in North Charleston, SC, offering a unique fusion of Southern smoke and traditional Chinese flavors. With a menu that is subject to change based on seasonality and availability, King BBQ prides itself on using only the freshest ingredients to create mouthwatering dishes that satisfy both BBQ and Asian cuisine enthusiasts.

Lewis BBQ (D) 464 N Nassau St., 805-9500. The first thing you'll notice when you pull up to Lewis Barbecue are the massive, custom-made smokers, welded by the pitmaster himself. Order at the counter, where John Lewis is slicing up true Central Texas barbecue, cut-to-order and daily specials to enjoy indoors or on the patio.

Melvins' BBQ (MP) 925 Houston Northcutt Blvd; (JI) 538 Folly Rd. Any native will tell you where locals go to eat the best barbecue in Charleston, and it's at Melvin's BBQ, Charleston's oldest barbecue restaurant that started over 80 years ago. Famous for inventing SC's mustard-based BBQ sauce and cooking over all wood pits. Come in for award-winning ribs, brisket, hash over rice, burgers, onion rings, and banana pudding.

Palmira Barbecue (WA) 2366 Ashley River Rd, 225-0417. Born in Puerto Rico, Hector Garate specializes in smoking beef cheeks, brisket, whole hog and house-made sausages. He partners with Brasstown Beef, Creekstone Farms, and Peculiar Pig Farms to source the most sustainable farm-to-table smoked meats.

Rodney Scott BBQ (D) 1011 King St., 990-9535. Celebrated counter-serve joint for Low-country-style slow-smoked pulled pork BBQ, chicken & ribs by famed pitmaster Rodney Scott. Open for lunch and dinner daily.

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charlestoncrabhouse.com

Oyster House
Patio Dining
Downtown
35 S. Market St.
843-723-1151
oysterhouse.menu

Shem Creek Crab House
Waterfront Dining
Mt. Pleasant
508 Mill St.
843-725-4902
charlestoncrabhouse.com

A.W. Shuck's Seafood Shack
Patio Dining
Downtown
208 King St.
843-628-1554
awshucksseafood.com

Charleston Crab House
Rooftop Dining
Downtown
41 S. Market St.
843-853-2900
charlestoncrabhouse.com

Bars and Taverns

Dunleavy's Pub (SI) 2213 Middle St., 883-9646. Traditional Irish-American fare offering excellent burgers, pub dogs, sandwiches from crab cakes to roast beef, salads and plate specials. Large beer selection and outdoor seating available.

Moe's Crosstown (D) 714 Rutledge Ave., 641-0469. No-frills vintage pub located near Hampton Park has an extensive menu of burgers, sandwiches and late-night menu for bar bites. A pool table and multiple TVs brings in sports fans and cold draft beer and happy hour specials brings in a regular crowd.

Poe's Tavern (SI) 2210 Middle St., 883-0083. Festive local pub serving fish tacos, sandwiches, salads and the best burgers on the island. Lunch and dinner daily.

The Griffon (D) 18 Vendue Range, 723-1700. A cozy English pub for fish 'n' chips, burgers, craft beer and extensive appetizer list, with walls covered in signed dollars. Open for lunch, dinner and late night eats daily.

Café

60 Bull Cafe (D) 60 Bull St., 718-3145. Upscale eatery offers elegant deli sandwiches, soups, salads and breakfast bites, as well as a variety of homemade prepared foods, deli meats and cheeses, produce and boutique wines and beer. Open daily. 9 am- 9 pm.

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East Bay Deli (D) 334 E Bay St. Ste H, 723-1234. Mouth-watering deli sandwiches with all the trimmings and an abundance of side dishes and specialties are all the rage at East Bay Deli. Choice meats and fresh-cut veggies, along with oversized spuds, make this a popular breakfast, lunch and dinner spot.

Five Loaves Café (MP) 1055 Johnnie Dodds Blvd., 849-1043. Gourmet soups, salads and sandwiches in a relaxed atmosphere. Daily soup menu includes nearly ten rotating selections. Lunch and dinner, Mon-Sat. Sunday brunch 10 am to 2 pm.

Saffron Café & Bakery (D) 333 E. Bay St., 722-5588. Freshly baked goods like breads, pastries and desserts, signature sandwiches and salads, pizza, housemade pasta and Middle Eastern specialties like saffron chicken and shrimp curry. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Live music on the weekends.

Ted's Butcherblock (D) 334 E Bay St., 577-0094. Old-fashioned butcher counter and gourmet deli has prepared foods to take home or eat at cafe tables. A neighborhood butcher, Ted's offers quality meats and seafood handcut to order. There's a large variety to choose from, including the monthly featured sandwich, paninis and elevated prepared foods.

Eclectic/Fusion

Kultura Charleston (D)73 Spring St Unit A. 974-1674. Small casual spot offering elevated and inventive Filipino dishes highlighting local, fresh ingredients served family style, plus weekend karaoke brunch from James Beard-nominated Chef Nikko Cagalanan. Dinner Thurs-Mon; weekend brunch and dinner.

Graze (MP) 863 Houston Northcutt Blvd., 606-2493. Diverse eclectic cuisine with small "grazing" plates. Dishes include spicy tuna tataki and Korean-style chicken wings. Lunch & dinner Mon-Sat.

Jack of Cups (FB) 34 Center St., 663-0042. Global and flavorful dishes like pumpkin curry soup, Thai noodle salad and a roasted poblano mac and cheese can be found on this seasonally-rotating menu. Enjoy a homemade sangria or pick from the curated beer, cocktail and wine list inside the cozy space or on the large outdoor patio.

Ma'Am Saab (D) 251 Meeting St., (843) 259-2660. Elevated Pakistani cuisine by Chef Maryam Ghaznavi in a decorated space. A focused menu with a modern take on traditional dishes like chicken tikka and specialty cocktails. Lunch Friday & Saturday; Dinner Tues.-Sat.

Pink Bellies (D) 595 King St, 640-3132. Vietnamese food fans have been following chef Thai Phi from food truck to pop-up to food court. Now, he's got a dazzlingly colorful sit-down restaurant where an array of noodle dishes take center stage (do not miss the garlic noodles!) Phi's motto: "Ngon quá!"—"Delicious!"

Fine Dining

FIG (D) 232 Meeting St., 805-5900. Nationally-acclaimed bistro serving fish, locally-sourced food. Menu changes daily with selections like fish stew provençal and chicken liver pâté.

Gabrielle (D) 404 King St., 843-990-5460. Bold and flavorful Southern cuisine that celebrates local bounty like grilled local swordfish and grilled oysters. Located inside Hotel Bennett, dine for lunch and dinner daily in the indoor dining room or outdoor dining terrace, which overlooks historic Marion Square.

High Cotton (D) 199 East Bay St., 724-3815. Southern cuisine offered high-fashion style, with fresh local vegetables, seafood and charbroiled steaks accompanied by tasty sauces like bearnaise and cabernet. Dinner nightly.

Magnolia's (D) 185 East Bay St., 577-7771. A refined take on traditional Southern cooking served in a warm, sophisticated environment. Pan seared sea scallops are served with a sweet corn hoe cake, pickled okra relish and brandy bacon cream. Lunch & dinner daily with Southern brunch on Sunday.

Peninsula Grill (D) 2 Unity Alley, 577-0025. Southern classics served in an elegant, yet relaxed setting. Bold flavors and impeccable service make this a local favorite. First class wine list and romantic courtyard dining available. Dinner nightly.

The Restaurant at Zero George (D) George St, 822-4872. Award-winning Restaurant at Zero George is where culinary artistry and team dedication converge in the heart of Charleston. The multi-course, seasonally inspired tasting menu highlights a contemporary approach to flavor building and presentation, expertly paired with international wines from their extensive cellar.

French

39 Rue De Jean (D) 39 John St., 722-8881. A refined French café and bar features Parisian-inspired classics, including five preparations of mussels, sweetbreads, braised rabbit and more.

Brasserie la Banque (D) 1 Broad St., 779-1800. Neighborhood French restaurant inside a historic former bank serves traditional French cuisine in the style of the classic French brasserie.

Chez Nous (D) 6 Payne Ct., 579-3060. Pint-sized and romantic neighborhood spot with elevated food and wine from France & around Europe in a cozy space. Only six dishes are served for lunch & dinner and changes daily. Check the restaurant's website or Instagram page to see what's being served today. Closed Monday.

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Felix Cocktails et Cuisine (D) 550 King St., 203-6297. Plates inspired by Paris in a trendy café-inspired setting, served until midnight, along with versatile cocktails and wines by the glass. Lunch and dinner daily with classic French dishes and brunch on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. with Parisian Mac et Cheese, quiches and more.

Gaulart & Maliclet Fast and French (D) 98 Broad St., 577-9797. Providing French food in Charleston since 1984 on iconic Broad Street. Lunch items include an open faced Croq' Monsieur and daily lunch specials for $13 that include a glass of French wine. A popular chef special fondue is featured on Thursdays for dinner. Breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Sat. Closed Sunday.

The Select (D) 465 Meeting St, 278-5025. The Select pays tribute to a classic brasserie of the same name in Paris, France, so you know you can expect a proper brasserie ambience, a French continental menu infused with Lowcountry flavors that hits all the right notes, an array of fruit-forward cocktails, and plenty of live entertainment, all from within downtown Charleston.

Italian

Indaco (D) 526 King St., 727-1228. Trendy eatery featuring Italian fare & wood-fired pizzas, hand-crafted pastas, homemade salumi and cured sausages plus a patio and extensive wine list. Dinner nightly and Sunday brunch.

Le Farfelle (D) 15 Beaufain St., 212-0920. Bright and airy neighborhood osteria for thoughtfully sourced, reimagined Italian cuisine with a host of rotating freshly-made pastas like duck confit agnolotti and squid ink spaghetti. Shared plates include octopus carpaccio and warm rosemary focaccia. Dinner nightly.

Melfi's (D) 721 King St. 513-0307. Melfi's is a trendy classic Italian restaurant with fresh pasta, salads, larger plates and inventive thin crust pizza. Sit at the long wooden bar, indoor and outdoor dining tables or an intimate pizza counter to watch the action of the two wood burning ovens. Reservations recommended. Dinner Monday-Sunday starting at 5 p.m.

Sorelle (D) 88 Broad St, 974-1575 You can thank James Beard Award-winning chef and restaurateur Michael Mina for gifting Charleston this destination restaurant. Sorelle is an incredible dive into Southern Italy, featuring bistecca alla Fiorentina, hand-cut pasta, grilled Sardinian octopus, and so much more. On "Wood-Fired Thursday," Sorelle offers a range of specialty pizzas at the bar.

Volpe (D) 161 Rutledge Ave, 718-1390. Chef/Owner Ken Vedrinski brings his famous Italian "Family Style" to the Charleston Peninsula. Cozy, family-style four-course meals inspired by his grandmother's cooking.

Mediterranean

Leylas (D) 298 King. St. 501-7500. Kebabs, meze and other Lebanese dishes are served in an upscale-casual space with a wine list that includes many Lebanese brands. Try the pan-seared halloumi cheese, fattosh salad, shawermas and more. Dinner nightly.

Lola Rose (MP) 3540 Park Avenue Blvd., 388-7940. Coastal Mediterranean cuisine in a relaxed, convivial setting showcases ingredients from the Lowcountry in seasonal salads, wood-fired pizzas, housemade pastas, local seafood and traditional mains along with Mediterranean and coastal American winemakers. Dinner Tues-Thurs; weekend lunch and dinner.

Muse (D) 82 Society St., 577-1102. Eclectic cuisine in a secluded and quiet atmosphere inside a Charleston single house. Entrees include grilled swordfish, sea bass, short ribs, duck, risotto, homemade pasta & bread and a large wine selection. Dinner nightly

Stella's (D) 114 St. Philip St., 400-0026. Classy throwback diner for Greek dishes and meze to share, plus Mediterranean Sunday brunch. Check out the whole fish of the day, topped with ladolemono, a traditional blended extra virgin olive oil and fresh lemon dressing. Dinner daily and Sunday brunch.

Taverna Philosophia (MP) 976 Houston Northcutt Blvd, 984-5005. A slice of the Greek islands with its open layout, high ceilings, and striking old brick accent wall. The Mediterranean decor is both casual and elegant, creating a comfortable yet sophisticated setting perfect for sharing mezze and mains with friends or family.

Mexican

Maya Del Sol Kitchen (NC) 1813 Reynolds Ave, 225-2390. Chef Raul Sanchez's lunch service features tacos, burritos and tortas at a simple diner-style counter. On Saturday nights, that counter is transformed into a chef's table for a fixed price, five-course dinner with a creative array of Mexican-themed plates.

Rancho Lewis (D) 1503 King St.. 996-4500. Elevated Mexican cuisine from the mesquite grill in the traditions of West Texas, Chihuahua Mexico and New Mexico with time- honored techniques and border-food-meets cowboy cuisine.. Indoor seating and an expansive outdoor patio. Lunch and dinner daily.

Taco Boy (D)217 Huger St. and (FB) 106 E Ashley Ave., 588-9761. Fresh Mexican entrees like fish and fried avocado tacos and an array of beer, margarita selections and their famous frozen screwdriver. Lunch & dinner daily, along with weekday menu item specials.

Seafood

176 Raw (D) 193 King St. A New England-style Oyster Bar in the heart of historic downtown Charleston, SC. Their menu highlights the outstanding seafood mecca that is the East Coast.

Bowen's Island (FB) 870 Bowens Island Rd. 795-2757. Known for its locally-harvested oysters, fried shrimp, hushpuppies, Frogmore stew, flowing beer and unmatched view of the river, marshes and islands, locals and visitors flock to this one-of-a-kind counter-service restaurant with their appetites and cameras. Dinner 5pm - 9:30 pm Tues through Sat.

Charleston Crab House (JI) 45 Wappoo Creek Dr., 795-1963; (D) 41 Market St., 853-2900. "Family owned for 30 years and still crackin!" Fresh Lowcountry seafood served in a casual, family atmosphere. Featuring fresh blue crabs, snow crab legs, ahi tuna, fresh salads and sandwiches, seafood platters and more. Lunch & dinner daily.

Coast (D) 39-D John St., 722-8838. Relaxed atmosphere with an array of fresh local seafood dishes including fresh ceviche and an outstanding drink list. Dinner nightly.

Chubby Fish (D) 252 Coming St., 222-3949. Small, warm neighborhood eatery and raw bar offering a varied and rotating menu of seafood—from seafood curry to ceviche—and large selection of oysters alongside a creative wine list and desserts. No reservations, two seatings per night for dinner.

Delancey Oyster House (D) 115 Calhoun St, 594-0099. Delaney Oyster House is a seafood-focused restaurant and raw bar by The Neighborhood Dining Group located in the heart of Charleston's downtown peninsula. Featuring fresh, sustainable seafood within a casual-chic atmosphere in a historic Charleston Single home.

Fleeting Landing (D) 186 Concord St, 722-8100. Housed in a 1940s retired naval building on the east side of the Charleston peninsula, Fleet Landing Restaurant features classic and contemporary Southern seafood fare in a setting that celebrates the area's waterfront heritage.

The Darling Oyster Bar (D) 513 King St, 641-0821. Neighborhood Bar and Seafood Restaurant in downtown Charleston, SC. Housed in a 120-year old storefront and offering fresh seafood daily and brunch on Sundays.

The Ordinary (D) 544 King St., 414-7060. Southern seafood hall and oyster bar located in an old bank. The fancy seafood menu celebrates the bounty of Coastal Carolina waters supporting local and regional fishermen, crabbers, oystermen, farmers and producers. A lively bar highlights the stunning space. Dinner Tues-Sun. Closed Monday.

Oyster House (D) 35 S Market St., 723-1151. Enjoy seafood favorites in one of Charleston's original warehouse buildings on historic Market Street. Our raw bar showcases oysters from around the country, and our menu features Lowcountry favorites such as shrimp & grits, fried seafood platters, crab cakes, and more! Lunch & dinner daily.

The Royal Tern (J) 3005 Maybank Hwy. 718-3434. Nested in the heart of Johns Island, The Royal Tern is an elevated neighborhood eatery with daily seafood specials and inspired cuisine. An array of freshly-prepared seafood and steaks as well as seafood towers and tartares from the raw bar. Open for dinner Monday-Saturday.

Southern

82 Queen (D) 82 Queen St., 723-7591. A swanky bar & intimate courtyard make this refined Southern spot a special-occasion favorite. Favorites include grilled salmon, seared duck breast, Carolina crab cakes and seasonal mussels. Excellent wine list. Lunch & dinner daily.

Leon's Oyster Shop (D) 698 King St, 531-6500 A comfortable Southern joint serving fried chicken, oysters, lots of salads, cheap beer, soft serve, rosé on tap, tons of grower Champagne, and good cocktails. The restaurant is housed in an old body shop.

Poogan's Porch (D) 72 Queen St, 829-4332. Southern hospitality and delicious cuisine come together for an unforgettable dining experience, serving up classic Southern dishes like shrimp and grits, fried chicken, and biscuits and gravy in a Victorian-style house.

Slightly North of Broad (D) 192 East Bay St., 723-3424. Delicious, upscale food like grilled Carolina quail, oyster stew and shrimp and grits in a casual setting. Lunch, Mon-Fri. Dinner nightly. Brunch Sat and Sun.

Virginia's on King (D) 412 King St., 735-5800. Upscale yet relaxed atmosphere serving up traditional fare like fried chicken, deviled crab, po'boys and an array of side dishes. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

Steaks

Grill 225 (D) 225 East Bay St., 266-4222. Upscale and fancy with private booths and white-jacketed service, serving up prime USDA steaks and select seafood entrees. Lunch & dinner daily.

Halls Chophouse (D) 434 King St and (S) 300 Nexton Square Dr., 727-0090. Family-owned and high-end dining with a rich interior setting and impeccable service, offering up steaks cooked to perfection and choice seafood dishes. Dinner nightly, Saturday lunch and Sunday gospel brunch with signature steaks and Southern favorites.

Marble & Fin (D) 480 E. Bay St, 278-5488. Pushing the boundaries of a modern-day steakhouse. Featuring sleek, airy interiors with ample natural light; polished, and progressive menus with options to delight every diner.

Oak Steakhouse (D) 17 Broad St., 722-4220. Upscale steakhouse fare in an impeccable setting, serving certified Angus beef and freshly-caught seafood. Award-winning wine list. Dinner nightly.

The Ocean Room at the Sanctuary (KS) 1 Sanctuary Drive., 768-6260. Rich mahogany sets the tone for this upscale eatery, serving up choice dry aged beef and fresh local seafood from an ever-changing menu. Dinner Tues-Sat.

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Art After the Storm

How Asheville's River Arts District has rebuilt and revived just months after Hurricane Helene

By KATIE MCELVEEN

Ten months after Hurricane Helene devastated Asheville, North Carolina, the city's arts district is open for business. I discovered Asheville's River Arts District—locals refer to it as the RAD—as I tend to discover things in a city: on a run, lost in what I was seeing and soon, actually lost. But it didn't matter.

As my run slowed to a jog and then an amble, I slipped in and out of the studios housed in the old factories and industrial buildings that lined the street, watching potters as they smoothed clay with muddy hands, peering at painters as they dabbed and, just before I turned for home, standing as far as I could get from a blob of molten glass spinning off the end of a blowpipe. For years, every visit to Asheville included a stop in the River Arts District, but I never had the time to really dig in.

Today, I'm back in Asheville for the first time since Hurricane Helene tore through the region in October. Thanks to the Radical, a 70-room boutique hotel located in the RAD, I'm finally able to spend days—rather than hours—exploring the neighborhood. I could have easily divided my time between the RAD and downtown Asheville—they're just a mile apart—but I wanted to fully take in this part of the city as a destination unto itself.

I knew that the RAD had been hit particularly hard by the storm, and the evidence was heartbreakingly real in the vacant lots, shuttered warehouses and empty shops I came across as I walked. But what really struck me was the level of recovery: just ten months ago, these streets and buildings had been submerged in the swirling water of the French Broad River. Today, more than 70 percent of the businesses in the River Arts District have reopened, many in their old locations. And while empty and damaged spaces still remain, they haven't been forgotten. Murals decorate the fencing that surrounds those vacant lots, optimistic signage covers buildings still in progress, and "we're open" placards lead visitors to bustling galleries within structures still in process.

PHOTO EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM

PHOTOS MATT KISIDAY; EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM

(Clockwise): Clockwise from above: Exploring the many vendors in the River Arts District and the very cool The Radical hotel and its fine dining restaurant, Golden Hour.

The Radical is a perfect fit for the neighborhood. It's funky for sure—the lobby feels like a futuristic Paris flea market—but staff members are open, friendly, and welcoming, and make me feel like I'm part of a special club. Rooms have a similar vibe—super cool and trendy, but rooted in reality: nothing was complicated, everything was comfortable. I didn't need directions to turn on the shower, turn off the lights, or open and close the blinds. Golden Hour, the hotel's fine-dining restaurant, is equally straightforward, but with style. The elements that composed my lamb sausage entrée—a link of grilled chef-made sausage atop a brothy mélange of summer peas, black-eyed peas, and rice—hit all the right notes; fresh mint added unexpected brightness.

My first stop, as always, is the North Carolina Glass Center, where the heat and cacophony of a working glass factory opens into a gallery that holds a rainbow's worth of vases, glasses, carafes, sculptures, lamps and other works. Next, I make my way to the Clayspace Co-op, where I can look over the handiwork of a dozen or so ceramic artists. When I take the two bowls I've chosen to the cash register, the artist, Lindsay West, stands from the wheel that's positioned behind the counter, wipes her hands, and smiles as she tells me that she is the artist who threw the pieces I'm purchasing. As West explains how the glassy emerald-hued pools in the bottoms of the bowls were formed—it's ash from the wood she uses to fire the pottery—I feel an even greater connection to them.

Since I've finally got time to explore the River Arts District beyond the main drag, I begin to wander. I'm most surprised by the number of restaurants in the area. Some, like Ultra Coffeebar and Baby Bull, are casual counter-service establishments; others, like the Bull & Beggar, where I drank French wine and ate oysters, salmon rillettes, and, for dessert, a blueberry and plum galette, are serving refined dishes in casual settings. Either way, fresh, delicious and creative food is readily available in the RAD, whether you're looking to eat in or grab and go.

Studios are equally varied. Some, like those on Artful Way, resemble tiny jewel boxes, and are filled with jewelry, clothing and bright leather goods. I almost skipped Depot Street—a vacant lot gave me the mistaken idea that the street was empty—and I'm glad I didn't. Bordered by a residential neighborhood, Depot Street is a mix of galleries, restaurants, a salon and a few medical offices in buildings topped by apartments. At ButterPunk, I sip coffee amid families eating breakfast BLTs and scones; across the street at NorthLight Studios, I contemplate Nadine Charlsen's large-scale watercolor of Paris. It may still find its way to my home.

On Clingman Avenue, I pause. One of the most notable pieces of pottery in my collection is a tray I purchased at an art show in 2019 from Akira Satake, an Asheville-based ceramicist whose unique interpretation of the kohiki pottery technique leaves each piece crackled with deep ridges of creamy glaze. I was fascinated, not just by the process but by the artist himself, who told me that his version of kohiki allows the fire to change the piece in unexpected ways, creating unforeseen beauty.

I had heard that Satake's studio had been destroyed by the storm, but I didn't know where he had landed. Until now. Though there was no signage, I'd stumbled onto his new location, which he was sharing with Rite of Passage, a slow-fashion label that constructs each piece on site. Though I'd just missed the artist, his wife, Cynthia, told me that Rite of Passage's owner had offered them a temporary space in November but that it had worked out so well that in April they'd decided to make it permanent. Like Satake's kohiki work, it was an example of the unintended beauty that can arise from hardship. ■

La Rentrée

Not just for French people

By ANNE WOLFE POSTIC

THE FRENCH REFER TO THE END OF THE SUMMER as “la rentrée.” Vacation is over, and everyone returns to reality. It may be a bit more jarring for them than for us Americans, given that most French workers have an annual leave of four to six weeks—and they may take it all at once. August is the most common month for vacation, and many French businesses, including restaurants, museums, and boutiques, close for all or part of the month. (Pro tip: Visiting France in the summer and have your heart set on seeing a specific piece of artwork or enjoying a meal in a favorite restaurant? Make sure they’re open before you book your flight!)

You might think la rentrée is something to dread. Au contraire! It’s a celebratory time, and many people look forward to catching up with colleagues, enjoying a busier social calendar, and getting back to a routine. The French are more likely to truly relax and unplug on vacation, so they return to work or school with renewed energy.

Alas, most of us are not French, and we don’t celebrate the end of a reprieve from work and school with the same vigor. (The exception might be parents of school-aged children, who welcome the new school year by enjoying a little peace and quiet at home—possibly sipping their first uninterrupted cup of coffee in months.) There’s still a buzz in the air at the end of summer, even for those of us who haven’t been students in more years than we like to count. September marks a new beginning—a time to get organized, make a few resolutions, and return to reality.

I often find myself buying school supplies, even though my children are adults and have been procuring their own notebooks, pencils and backpacks for a while. Sure, I’m susceptible to the lure of seasonal ad campaigns, but September also feels like the right time to organize the pens in my desk, make sure I have a neat stack of envelopes and stamps, and check my printer’s toner levels. And I’m not returning to anything—as a freelancer, I can work whenever and wherever. My humble home office is a desk in one of the aforementioned children’s vacated bedrooms.

I claimed my workspace one crisp September morning, when I also bought new sheets for the bed, a pretty throw rug, and fresh shades for the windows. I celebrated my personal rentrée by transforming the space into a guest room—even though we weren’t expecting anyone until the following summer—and carving out a corner for my office. Finding the perfect small file box, one that could be moved when guests occupied the room, was invigorating—like filling a chic new pencil case with unadulterated new pencils and highlighters.

After the room was finished, sunlight streamed through the windows as a new workday dawned. September makes me more organized. It’s a fresh start to my work life.

Does the enthusiasm wane after a while? Of course. But a brighter space and a shiny new calendar, can end a slump, opening the door to creativity. Then, as the end of the “semester” approaches and holiday parties call my name, a new slump begins. But no need to worry—January, with its resolutions and yet another new calendar, is right around the corner!

A few months later, spring cleaning is another new beginning. Do I actually clean things? Not so much, but I plant a few things, make a few home repairs that have been annoying me for too long, and start making plans for the summer. The start of every season is a miniature rentrée, a time to reset. But September will remain my favorite. I may not be a schoolgirl, but I’m a giddy Pavlov’s dog when it comes to school supplies, new organization tools, and maybe even a new dress for my first day. Besides, that new dress will come in handy—everyone’s back in town and we can start planning lunch dates again. Balmy summer nights are lovely, but there’s plenty of joy in the hustle and bustle of real life. Hooray for la rentrée! ■

C’EST
LA RENTRÉE

PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK

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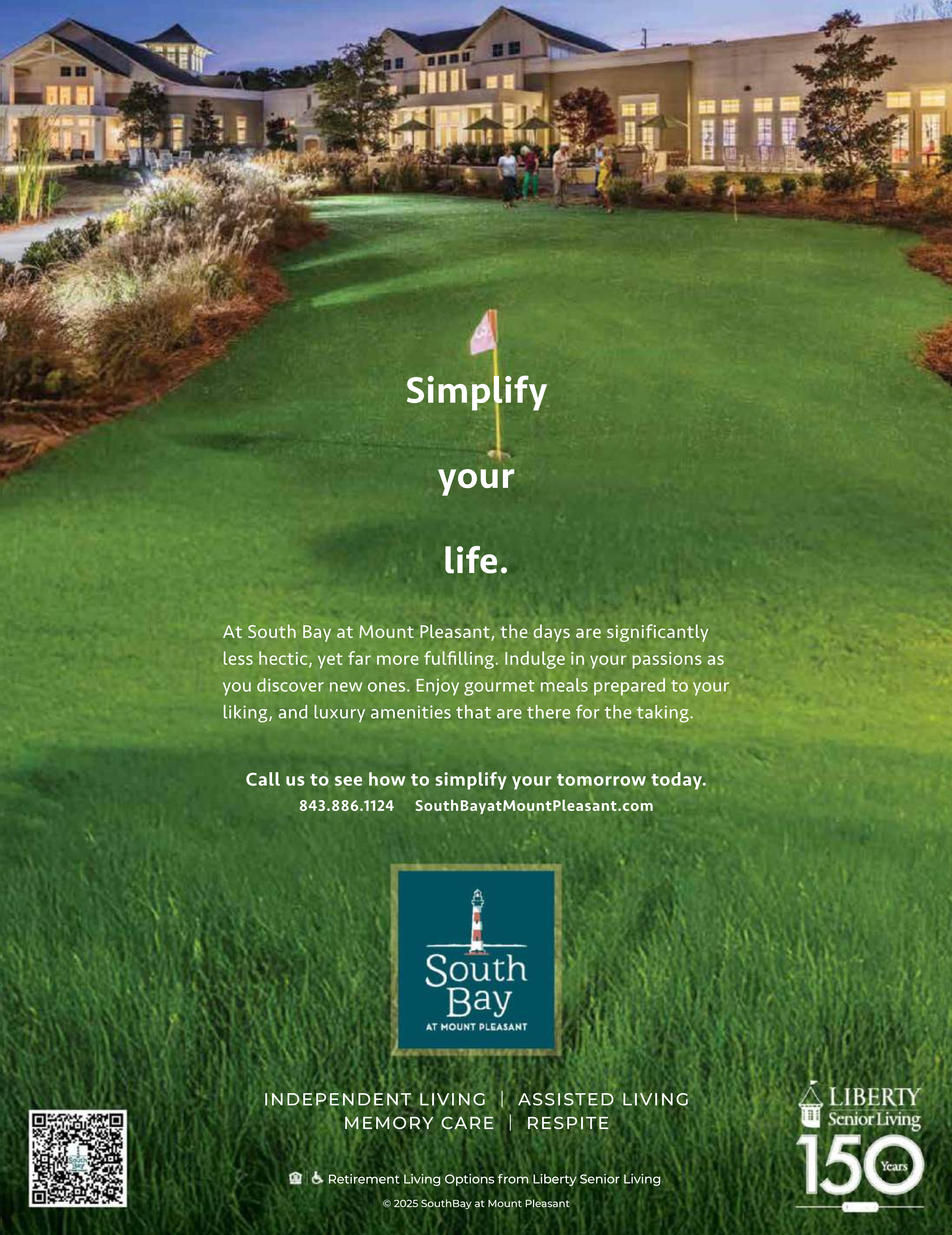

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